

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية غير حزبية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Iran says its envoy to Croatia attacked

DUBAI (R) — Iran's ambassador to Croatia was attacked and beaten by three men Tuesday while on his way from Zagreb to Sarajevo, an Iranian diplomat was quoted as saying. Iran's ambassador to Bosnia, Ibrahim Taherian, told the official Iranian News Agency IRNA that the attack on Mohammad Javad Asayesh "does not seem to be politically motivated." He said the attack took place on Saturday when Mr. Asayesh was on his way from Zagreb to Sarajevo accompanied by his wife. "Three men stopped the ambassador's car... and beat him badly, leaving him with a broken nose and cuts on his face," he said. U.N. police have arrested one of the attackers, he added. During the 1992-95 war in former Yugoslavia, Iran violated an international arms embargo and supplied weapons to the Muslim-led Bosnian army which was outgunned by Serb forces.

Fahd to settle border dispute with Yemen

SANAA (AFP) — The Saudi Interior Minister has met Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to deliver a message from King Fahd on the 60-year-old border dispute between the two countries, the official news agency Saba said Tuesday. It said the message, delivered here Monday by Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz, underlined "the determination of the Saudi kingdom to find a definitive and brotherly solution to the border question in a satisfactory manner." The prince told journalists he would also meet his Yemeni counterpart Hussein Arab. The two neighbours on the Arabian peninsula signed an agreement in 1995 to settle their dispute by granting the provinces of Najran, Assir and Jizan to Saudi Arabia and setting up a committee to fix their border. But the committee has made little headway in its negotiations.

Volume 22 Number 6572

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 1997, SAFAR 25, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Regent meets with police chief

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, on Tuesday called at the Public Security Department (PSD) where he met with PSD Director General Nasouh Mubieddin, who briefed him on PSD activities and its role in maintaining security and stability, in addition to safeguarding the country's achievements and resources.

Egypt has not yet decided to attend MENA

TOSKA (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Tuesday his country had not yet decided whether it would attend a controversial Arab-Israeli economic conference due to be held in Qatar in November. Mr. Mubarak, touring the site of a large irrigation scheme near the southern province of Aswan, also told reporters he hoped the Palestinians and Israelis would make progress towards kick-starting their stalled peace talks within the next 10 days (see story on page 2). Qatar is due to host the fourth Middle East/North Africa (MENA) economic conference since landmark Middle East peace negotiations began in 1991.

Israel says it killed guerrilla in Lebanon zone

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said on Tuesday its forces had killed at least one guerrilla during an overnight clash in its south Lebanon occupation zone. "At least one terrorist was killed when an Israeli army force on an operational initiative on the border of the eastern sector of the south Lebanon security zone encountered a terrorist cell," the army said in a statement. It said there were no Israeli casualties. Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas are fighting to oust Israeli troops and their local militia allies from a 15-kilometre-wide border zone they occupy in south Lebanon.

Iran hopes to reopen consulate in Hong Kong

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran hopes to reopen its consulate in Hong Kong now that the former British colony has been turned over to China. Deputy Foreign Minister Alaeddin Boroujerdi said Tuesday. Mr. Boroujerdi, speaking on Radio Tehran, said the Iranian consulate in Hong Kong had been closed by the British authorities. He did not say when the consulate was closed or give a reason for the move. He described Monday's handover of Hong Kong as "a great victory for China and a defeat for world repression." China was one of the major suppliers of weapons to Iran during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and is one of Tehran's main trading partners.

UAE lifts tobacco tax to 70 per cent

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates' cabinet has approved a draft law to increase the tax on tobacco and related products to 70 per cent from a previous 50 per cent, UAE newspapers said Tuesday. The move clears the way for the law's final ratification by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, which political sources said was usually a formality. Gulf Arab states in principle agreed in December to raise customs duties on tobacco to 70 per cent.

Majali meets Sheikh Khalifa, aims to further bilateral trade

By P.V. Vivekanand
Special to the Jordan Times

BAHRAIN — The Emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, on Tuesday received a message from His Majesty King Hussein on bilateral relations and the latest developments in the Middle East.

The message was delivered by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, at a meeting attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa at Ghudabiya Palace.

The Emir paid tribute to Jordanian-Bahraini relations, voiced pride in the strength of the relationship and praised the role played by Jordan in the service of Arab and Islamic causes and in the Middle East peace process, the Gulf News Agency (GNA) reported.

Dr. Majali stressed that his visit turned a new page in bilateral relations "in the service of the peoples of the two countries and the Arab

World," GNA said.

Dr. Majali also praised the prominent role played by Bahrain in support of Gulf, Arab and Islamic causes and the country's regional and international reputation and its economic achievements.

The Emir and Sheikh Khalifa discussed with Dr. Majali means to consolidate Jordanian-Bahraini relations and other issues related to Gulf, Arab and international developments in addition to subjects of mutual concern.

Economic ties in particular are expected to be given a strong boost during Dr. Majali's visit here.

Dr. Majali, who is on his first visit to Bahrain as prime minister, is accompanied by several ministers and senior Jordanian officials.

Bilateral trade last year between Bahrain and Jordan was \$50 million compared to \$35 million in 1992. Bahrain's main imports from Jordan are vegetables,

medical drugs and sheep. Exports to Jordan include ammonia, aluminium products, corn oil and air conditioners.

The two countries signed a trade agreement in 1995 calling for preferential and duty free treatment for some of their products. They also signed a tentative agreement last year to boost manpower services between the two countries.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ali Ben Youssef Fakhro said Jordanian-Bahraini trade should increase, particularly after the discussions held on the fringe of the Bahraini exhibition in Amman.

"Participants in the symposium decided to activate trade movement between the two countries and provide facilities which support these trade relations and encourages investors to set up joint projects according to investment legislations and regulations of each country," he said.

The Bahrain Marketing and Promotions Board (BMPB) said meanwhile, new business contracts between Bahraini and Jordanian businessmen amount to \$6 million. BMPB corporate relations manager Ghanim Al Dosari described the Bahraini exhibition in Amman as a major success. "More than 50,000 people visited the Bahraini exhibition and this shows that there is a great response to Bahraini products," he said.

Jordanian Ambassador to Bahrain Shaker Arabiyat emphasised on the unique historical relation which links the two countries.

"The projects and dreams which the two countries have are much bigger than the ones already achieved," said the ambassador. "Preparations have started for a Jordanian exhibition in Bahrain in September and such events help strengthen the economic ties between the two countries," he said.

Israel's army bows to PNA over memorial

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — The Israeli army bowed to Palestinian demands and removed Tuesday a memorial to a slain Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip in what appeared to be a sign of improved security relations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

The army's announcement of its removal followed news that Herzl Getz, chief of Israel's Security Liaison Committee with the Palestinians had on Sunday met his counterpart Ziad Attrash along with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Israel Radio hailed the meeting as a resumption of security cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians halted more than three months ago when Israel broke ground on a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

But a PNA official who declined to be identified said Mr. Arafat made clear during the meeting that the only cooperation with Israel of interest to Pales-

tinians was of the type which included the United States, the main broker in peace moves.

The official said Mr. Arafat told Mr. Getz the Palestinians did not want to escalate violence or confront Israelis but bilateral cooperation would resume only when work was halted on the Jerusalem settlement.

Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh, acknowledging U.S. and Egyptian mediation in Israeli-PNA security matters, said the meeting appeared to be a sign. "The Palestinian National Authority has reached the conclusion that any slide...towards violence and terror will not serve the Palestinian interest."

But he said: "The real test...is in results in the field over a length of time."

An Israeli military spokeswoman said the army "transferred the memorial placed at the Gush Katif intersection to a military base for temporary safe keeping until a

permanent site is found." Jewish settlers placed the stone slab at the junction last month in memory of a soldier killed in Israeli-Palestinian violence last September. Palestinians held stone-throwing protests at the site and demanded the memorial be taken away.

"We decided to move it because we found the harm in leaving it in place outweighed the damage and sorrow that would be caused by taking it away," Major General Shlomo Yanai, chief of the army's southern headquarters, said in broadcast remarks.

"We think it is only fair to act this way. As the ones who made the mistake, we also have to be strong and brave enough to admit it and rectify it," he said in the southern city of Beer-sheba.

But Aharon Tzur, head of the Council of Jewish Settlements in the area, told army radio he felt shock and humiliation over the military's move.

Jewish settler leader meets Palestinians to defuse Hebron anger

HEBRON (AFP) — A leader of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip said Tuesday that he met with prominent Palestinians in a bid to ease tension over anti-Islamic posters pasted on Arab shops here.

Aharon Domb, who heads a West Bank and Gaza settlers' group, told AFP that his meeting with leading Palestinians from Hebron was aimed at averting violence in this West Bank city following the weekend poster incident.

Tatiana Soskind, 25, a Jewish extremist from Jerusalem, has been arrested after admitting to putting up the posters insulting the Prophet Mohammad.

"We met for half-an-hour," Mr. Domb said. "We had a coffee together and tried to work out ways to calm people down."

Mr. Domb did not identify the Palestinians he met but said that they were "influential religious dignitaries whom I've known for more than 20 years and who are not linked to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)."

Several hundred Palestinians accompanied by PNA officials staged a march in Hebron on Tuesday carrying placards such as "No peace with settlers," "Hebron, an Arab and Muslim city forever."

Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a leading Israeli rabbi have condemned the posters, which sparked outrage among Palestinians and Arab countries.

The pictures were found early Saturday on around 20 shops near Jewish enclaves in Hebron's Old City, sparking a new wave of violence between Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers after clashes which left 170 Arabs injured last month.



A Palestinian policeman stands next to members of Force 17, an elite unit that guards Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who went on trial Tuesday. Eight members of Force 17 have been accused of beating to death Nasser Redwan, a 28-year-old Palestinian after his arrest last week in the Gaza Strip (Reuters photo)

Abolishing limits on foreign ownership of equity poised to attract over \$400 million

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over \$400 million of capital will be flowing into Jordan as a result of the decision to abolish the non-Jordanian equity ownership ceiling in the Amman Financial Market (AFM), transportation, insurance, banking, telecommunications and agricultural sectors, according to Ziad Basha, securities manager at the British Bank.

"Jordan will be the [magnet] attracting foreign investments. We created the momentum and accelerated capital inflow," Mr. Basha told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

However, the construction, retail trading and metallurgy sectors were excluded from the decision, keeping the non-Jordanian equity ownership ceiling at 50 per cent.

The excluded sectors "are very wide sectors which need to be classified in a more detailed manner," Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times.

"We open up sectors which we feel contribute to the benefit of Jordan and where there is a comparative advantage to be utilised," he said.

Mr. Basha said that all fund managers who follow the

International Finance Corporation (IFC) index will be targeting Jordan.

He explained that the IFC, the "merchant arm" of the World Bank, covers 30 emerging markets. Jordan is represented in this index weighing 0.3 per cent, he added.

Mr. Basha noted that the Arab Bank and the Islamic Bank, which are represented at the IFC index, exceeded the 50 per cent non-Jordanian equity ownership.

"Because the government decided to remove the ceiling, those fund managers will have the opportunity to manage their investments according to the index by purchasing shares in the Arab Bank and Islamic Bank along with the Arab Pharmaceutical, Jordan Cement, Arab International Hotels, the Housing Bank and the Jordan National Bank," Mr. Basha asserted.

He also stressed that approximately \$50 million will flow into the Kingdom as a result of the first global depository receipt (GDR) issued by the Arab Potash Company.

Arab Potash, the second largest capitalised firm in Jordan's stock market, last month invited global banks to submit proposals on an

estimated \$50 million GDR listing to be traded at the London stock exchange by the end of the year.

The first Eurobond issue by Jordan Phosphate Mines Company against the London-based HSBC Markets last month will also attract \$100 million, said Mr. Basha.

The Housing Bank also doubled its capital from JD25 million to JD50 million, and is attracting \$176 million of Arab investments to be paid on July 15, he added.

"It is finally our turn, and the above figures already show the reward of opening our economy. About \$426 million of capital inflow will surely come to Jordan as a result of the recent government decision," Mr. Basha stressed.

Acting Director General of the Investment Promotion Corporation Reem Badran said the decision to lift the ceiling on non-Jordanian equity ownership will be implemented as soon as it is approved by the Cabinet.

With reference to the excluded sectors, she said the government will review these sectors at a later stage.

Turkey welcomes Yilmaz's secularist cabinet as end to crisis with military

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey expressed relief and optimism Tuesday at the formation of Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's broad-based cabinet, which turned the page on a year of confrontation between the military and an unpopular pro-Islamist government.

The staunchly secular cabinet approved Monday by President Suleyman Demirel marks a triumph for Turkey's generals, who accused the pro-Islamist Welfare Party of threatening the country's secular traditions.

Their skillful four-month campaign to secure last month's resignation of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan had paralysed the country and prompted widespread fears of a coup.

"There is hope everywhere," said a deputy of the Party of the Democratic Left (DSP), one of the two junior partners in Mr. Yilmaz's coalition, which also includes the right-wing Party

for a Democratic Turkey (DTP).

"There is a great sense of relief," he told AFP. "It is one of the best governments we've had in a long time. Each party gave it its best people. Now there is a lot of expectations and it is up to us and our friends to work very hard to fulfil them."

Mr. Yilmaz's cabinet is now poised to win a parliamentary vote of confidence around July 12 following a wave of defections by deputies from Tansu Ciller's True Path Party, a partner in the Islamist-led government.

Newspapers were unanimous in their praise of what they called a "reconciliation government" even while acknowledging that Mr. Yilmaz, head of the Motherland Party, has his work cut out for him.

His government must reverse what is perceived as creeping Islamisation orchestrated by Mr. Erbakan's coalition.

The mass-circulation daily Hurriyet gushed in an edito-

rial: "It's not just a change of government, it's a miracle. The nightmare is over."

Another daily, Cumhuriyet, said the outgoing coalition had been "in contradiction with Turkey."

The moderate Islamist press kept a stiff upper lip, the daily Zaman headlining "Good luck," while the Islamic extremist paper Akit described the new government as "shameful."

Mr. Yilmaz said his cabinet "was not a government of elections but a government of solutions," thus signalling his intention to address Turkey's problems and not just shepherd the country to early elections, as wished by the outgoing coalition.

The prime minister and his two deputy premiers, DSP leader Bulent Ecevit and DTP member Ismet Sezgin, have mapped out an ambitious programme aimed mainly at strengthening Turkey's secular and democratic foundations and cleaning up the state apparatus.

Arafat warns Israel against trying to retake autonomous territory

BEIRUT (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat warned the Israeli army in an interview published Tuesday against trying to recapture parts of the West Bank or Gaza Strip turned over to Palestinian self-rule.

In an interview with Al Nahar newspaper, Mr. Arafat said Israeli troops would pay a "high price" if they attempted to retake territory turned over to his Palestinian National Authority (PNA) under the

autonomy agreements with Israel.

The Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharanot reported last week that the army has tested plans to invade and reoccupy Palestinian enclaves in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in a doomsday scenario in which Mr. Arafat's authority collapses.

Israeli military intelligence has warned that the freeze in the peace process, now more than three months old, could lead to

violence by the Palestinians which could, in the worst case, cause the collapse of the PNA, the daily said.

Israeli state radio said the army has drawn up and exercised a simulation to reoccupy the Palestinian territories in case the situation falls apart.

"All of the territory controlled by the Palestinian National Authority is surrounded by Israeli army tanks and armoured vehicles carrying out exercises," Mr. Arafat told the newspaper.

He said the likelihood of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moving against the autonomous regions was "very high and anything is possible."

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have been suspended since Israel began building a settlement for 30,000 Israelis in mid-March in historically Arab east Jerusalem, which Palestinians want as the capital of a future state.

Bahrain expels German

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain on Tuesday expelled the Gulf correspondent of the German news agency DPA, Ute Meinel, for writing "fallacious and offensive" articles against the state.

The official news agency GNA announced. It said the news agency has sent a written apology to Bahraini authorities.

But DPA, in a report from its headquarters in Hamburg, said the expulsion was "completely incomprehensible and a violation of the principles of press freedom."

Ms. Meinel, a German national who worked for nearly three years in Manama where she was the last Western correspondent left, flew out of the Gulf state the same day.

The offending article was a report citing the London-based opposition group, the Bahrain Freedom Movement, on the unrest which has swept the country since December 1994.

It allegedly brought "discredit upon the nation's royal family."

DPA said Ms. Meinel was questioned for several hours last week at the interior ministry, had her passport confiscated, and was threatened with a trial which was to have opened last Saturday.

But the trial was dropped and Ms. Meinel allowed to leave the country after diplomatic efforts by the German ambassador to Manama, Norbert Heinze, the agency said.

Bahrain has expelled or threatened with expulsion a number of foreign correspondents over the past two decades.

Mubarak expects imminent progress in peace process

'Egypt is still continuing mediation effort to end the deadlocked talks'

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Tuesday expressed optimism over the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process, saying he expected some progress within the next week.

"In the past few weeks, there were some contacts between the Israelis and Palestinians. I am not in a position to reveal any of that ... (but) I hope they could conclude something within a week," he said.

Speaking to reporters on the way to visit an irrigation project in Egypt's western desert, Mr.

Mubarak confirmed that Egypt was continuing the mediation effort it launched at the start of June to end a three-month freeze in peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinians broke off negotiations in mid-March after Israel began construction of a 6,500-home Jewish settlement in occupied Arab east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want as the capital of a future state.

Israel has repeatedly refused to bow to Palestinian demands for an end to all settlement building before the resumption of

talks.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian news agency, MENA, announced Tuesday that Mubarak's envoy Osama Baz, who has been spearheading the Egyptian mediation effort, had delayed a new shuttle diplomacy mission because of the current political crisis in Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy is threatening to resign from the government if hardline Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon is given a place at the negotiating table with the Palestinians.

Saudi envoy pays rare visit to Iran

DUBAI (R) — An envoy of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd arrived in Tehran on Tuesday on a rare visit by a Saudi official to Iran, the latest attempt to improve ties between two of the world's biggest oil producers.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA said Minister of State Abdul Aziz Ben Abdullah Khoweitar delivered messages from King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is due to hand over his post to President-elect Mohammad Khatami in August.

"Asked about the content of the messages, the Saudi state minister said that both deal with expansion of relations between the two Muslim countries," IRNA added.

It said Mr. Khoweitar would leave Tehran later on Tuesday.

Diplomats in Saudi Arabia said the visit was a new sign of a thaw in icy ties between the two regional powerhouses

whose cooperation is seen as vital for stability in a region that sits on more than two thirds of the world's oil reserves.

Ties have often been tense since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, mainly over the presence of Western forces in the Gulf, the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, Iran's arms programme and charges that it meddles in its neighbours' internal affairs.

Shiite Iran denies the charges and its leaders have repeatedly said they want to rebuild trust with their mostly Sunni Muslim Arab neighbours.

"Relations are definitely warming up, but they still have a long way to go," one Western diplomat in Riyadh said.

"The Iranians appear serious in trying to establish better relations and the Saudis have indicated they are willing to meet them halfway," another diplomat said.

Yemen hikes petrol prices, electricity and water charges

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen on Tuesday hiked the costs of petrol, water and electricity as part of an economic reform programme while increasing public sector wages by 20 per cent to compensate.

The price of a litre of petrol went up from 19 riyals (14 cents) to 25 riyals (19 cents), a rise of 26 per cent, while water and electricity charges were doubled.

Kerosene went up from

three riyals (2.5 cents) to five riyals (four cents) a litre.

The cabinet also decided to cut subsidies on wheat and flour by 25 per cent, and telephone charges went up by the same margin.

The economic reforms in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, are the third phase of a programme launched in 1995 in coordination with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The first two waves of reforms included reducing subsidies on oil and electricity, and increased tariffs on public services such as telecommunications.

A doubling of petrol prices in March 1995 sparked violent protests, especially in the main southern town of Aden.

The government now aims to eradicate all subsidies on wheat and flour in 1998 and to slash the size of the public sector, laying off

around 35,000 employees. Reforms in banking and the financial sector are also planned.

A government source said the rise in salaries would not be paid until the new year, but with retroactive effect.

The reforms to date have allowed Yemen to cut inflation from 74 per cent in 1995 to a projected level of 11.5 per cent for 1997, another official told AFP, asking not to be named.

A planning ministry source said subsidies on fuel, food and services have fallen from \$600 million a year to \$450 million since the first reforms were carried out.

In June, Yemen received a \$1.8 billion loan from the International Community for Infrastructure Projects and won praise for its reforms.

Sudanese leader declares amnesty for armed rebels

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir marked the eighth anniversary of his seizure of power by declaring a general amnesty to all armed opposition groups to his government.

President Bashir, dressed in civilian clothes, spoke late Monday in a televised speech in the Chinese-built friendship hall to an audience of officials, diplomatic corps members, soldiers and members of the public.

"From this platform I declare general amnesty to everyone from the south and the north who carried arms so that he can come back home," General Bashir said.

The implication was that the pardon would include not only the rebel south Sudanese movement but also the northern opposition groups based in neighbouring Eritrea who have recently taken up arms in a bid to topple the Khartoum government.

Gen. Bashir listed his government's accomplishments with emphasis on a peace agreement reached with a number of south Sudanese factions that split from the mainstream Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

While those factions have now allied with the government, the SPLA has joined forces with the northern opposition.

The Sudanese leader also listed economic achievements

ranging from an increase in the area under cultivation to development of an oil industry.

"In two years' time from now, the Sudan will join the oil producers club, God willing," he said.

Gen. Bashir, noting that Sudan is rich in mineral resources like oil, gold, copper, iron and mica, invited foreign investors, saying "we will remove all obstacles that face them."

He implicitly condemned Western governments, such as the U.S., which has accused Khartoum of violating human rights and sponsoring terrorism.

"We respect the options of peoples and their endeavours, in their own ways, for achieving development and prosperity, we are opposed to interference in other countries' internal affairs and conspiring against the gains of other countries," he said.



Israeli soldiers give first aid to a comrade after he and another soldier were injured by a bomb thrown by Palestinians in Hebron on Tuesday. Unrest resumed here following a Palestinian demonstration against the leaflets. More than 28 Palestinians were wounded Tuesday as they were hit by rubber bullets and rocks (AFP Photo)

Offender of Islam must be killed, top Egyptian Muslim cleric rules

CAIRO (R) — A top Egyptian Muslim cleric said Tuesday the person who drew posters in the West Bank city of Hebron insulting the Prophet Muhammad must be killed.

Palestinian shopkeepers found the posters Sunday on about 20 storefronts

near a Jewish settlement enclave in Hebron. Dozens of Palestinians took to the streets of the divided city in protest.

"Any one who is proved to have drawn this ugly picture of the prophet of Islam... should be killed according to Islamic law," Mohammad Sayyed

Tantawi, grand sheikh of the Cairo-based Al Azhar Mosque — Islam's most prestigious seat of learning — told reporters.

An Israeli court remanded for five days 25-year-old Jerusalem resident Taryana Suskin, suspected of pasting the posters, Israel's army radio said.

Israel handed over most of Hebron to Palestinian self-rule in January but kept troops in about 20 per cent of the city to guard some 400 Jewish settlers who live in fortified enclaves in the heart of the city of 100,000 Palestinians.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:35Cartoons
16:00Tennis From Wimbledon
19:00News in French
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Dv. — Grace Under Fire
20:00Soldier's Diary
20:30Challenges
21:10Spencer For Hire
22:00News in English
22:30Cobra
23:15American Gothic

PRAYER TIMES

03:54Fajr
05:29Sunrise/Duha
12:39Dhuhr
16:20Asr
19:50Maghreb
21:25Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623366
Anglican Church Tel. 632826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church

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Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 673601.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Relative warm and dry weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate and sea calm.

Amman20/25
Aqaba27/40
Deserts17/36
Jordan Valley23/41

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 34, Aqaba 40 Humid-

ity readings: Amman 18 per cent. Aqaba 28 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Fayer Dabbas759155
Dr. Mazen Nblal830435
Dr. Adnan Zaghlool898140
Dr. Fakher Bilbeel552233
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asama pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Mazen Safarini985832
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630321
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192. 621111.

637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir,775111/26

Army, Marka,891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602340/50

Amal Hospital,674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 365199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital

(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

08:05Damascus (RJ)

09:00Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

09:25 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:30Jeddah (RJ)

10:15Laraca (RJ)

10:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

15:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:40 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)

18:05Istanbul (RJ)

18:05Paris (RJ)

18:40Brussels (RJ)

18:45Madrid (RJ)

19:10Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

12:40Casablanca (RJ)

12:45Istanbul (RJ)

20:10Colombo (RJ)

20:35Beirut (RJ)

21:00New Delhi (RJ)

21:10Cairo (RJ)

21:10Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)

21:15 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)

21:20Bombay (RJ)

23:00Muscat (RJ)

23:45Sanaa (RJ)

02:30Dubai (add) (RJ)

03:00Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)

04:15Bahrain (RJ)

Other Flights

09:15 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)

11:00Sanaa, Jeddah (SV)

12:00Al Arish (PF)

13:00Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)

13:15Cairo (MS)

13:50Tel Aviv (LY)

14:30Tunis (TU)

15:05Vienna (OS)

16:20Algiers (AH)

17:00Doha (Q7)

19:30Istanbul, Damascus (PK)

20:40London (GA)

21:10Beirut (ME)

21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)

23:20Amsterdam (KL)

23:30Athens (OA)

05:15Ankara (TK)

07:50Amsterdam (GA)

DEPARTURES

07:



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali during his meeting with Bahrain's Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifeh Ben Salman Al Khalifeh (See story on page 1) (Petra photo)

'Enraged' Fuheis residents destroy coffee shop

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

FUHEIS — Five people, who late Monday were arrested by police for destroying a coffee shop in Fuheis, were Tuesday released from detention, according to Mayor Anton Dyat. The five formed part of a group of approximately 300 people, between the ages of 18 and 30, who were arrested shortly after entering and destroying the Arizona Coffee Shop on King Hussein St. in the Alali area at approximately 10 p.m. Over the past week, Fuheis residents complained that the coffee shop was offering auxiliary "immoral" services to the traditional tea, coffee and bubbly, prompting people from outside the area to enter en masse. "It seems that some youths were enraged by the situation and decided to take things into their own hands," Mr. Dyat told the Jordan Times. "Luckily the problem was resolved quickly and all those responsible for the attack have been released."

"All kinds of people have penetrated

our open but traditional society," according to Hana Samawi, an electronics shopowner. "Our community rejected this influx."

The problem intensified when recently "we noticed that the coffee shop was bringing in belly dancers and prostitutes, thereby contradicting our traditions and beliefs," he added. Neighbouring houses and stores complained to authorities that the coffee shop was "in fact a nightclub, but we received no official response."

"There were drunks brawling nightly and some of them were harassing Fuheis women," Mr. Samawi added. "This impinges on our honour and dignity."

Fuheis residents do not accept the existence of such places, he said. In fact, he explained, two years ago, residents rejected the idea of opening a cinema.

Fuheis residents decided to take the matter into their own hands, said one witness to the brawl. "They took advantage of a small brawl which erupted in the coffee shop at 10:00 p.m., entered the shop and smashed

everything."

According to Mr. Dyat, the shop owner obtained the necessary licences for bubbly, soft drinks and the employment of artists for three months.

He further stated that the shop owner was not issued a licence to serve alcohol, "but our assumptions are that customers were sneaking alcoholic drinks inside and that is not the fault of the shopowners," the mayor stressed.

If the shopowner decides to re-open his café, we will allow him, "but with conditions and control," he added.

In a book regularly published by Fuheis Municipal Council, ("municipal council services from July 95 — Dec. 96"), Mr. Dyat maintained that Fuheis was ready for tourism, but criticised the establishment of Al Riwaq Gallery, a commercial enterprise with restaurants and shops.

"... that alcohol is served [in the gallery] is out of the ordinary, and the unfortunate residents living near it reside in an unbalanced social atmosphere," Mr. Dyat wrote in the book.

Dispute over elections participation intensifies

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dispute between the Muslim Brotherhood and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), on whether to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections reached a fevered pitch on Tuesday, when the Arabic daily Al Ra'i reported that Secretary General Ishaq Farhan had resigned.

Capitalising on the current stalemate in the peace process and its resultant economic hardships, the IAF is expected to better its 1993 performance and increase its number of seats in the Lower House from the 17 it won in the twelfth parliament.

In an interview with the Jordan Times a few weeks ago, Dr. Farhan declared that he expected to win "at least 20" of the House's 80 seats, and affirmed his readiness to join a post-election coalition with the centrist National Constitutional Party (NCP).

For the past few weeks, however, a clear trend opposing participation in the next elections has risen in the

Brotherhood.

Though financially and administratively independent, the Brotherhood has always maintained a strong political influence on the IAF, and Arabic weeklies recently suggested that should the Brotherhood's majority anti-participation stand prevail, Dr. Farhan would resign.

Though IAF leaders yesterday refused either to deny or confirm the report, a party source, speaking under condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times that the report referred to an "old" dispute, following which Dr. Farhan had, indeed, handed in his resignation, but had then withdrawn it shortly afterwards.

Another party source, also requesting anonymity, said yesterday evening that no official resignation letter had been forwarded, but refused to confirm as to whether a top-level party meeting had been summoned for later.

Minimising differences, a member of the IAF Executive Bureau, Mohammed Alwaideh recently stated that "the issue of divisions and conflicts between the Muslim Brother-

hood and the IAF has been [reported] since the IAF was established (in 1992).

"There has not been a week when the papers did not report [such disputes]," he added.

Describing the current situation as "a clash of viewpoints within the institutionalised framework of the Shura (Islamic) dialogue and thereby interpreted by the papers as a division," Dr. Alwaideh maintained that "the IAF has taken two decisions: The first is to participate in the next electoral process; the second is to boycott if [the party] feels that the government will attempt to falsify the results."

"Both are institutional decisions," he confirmed.

A memorandum requesting the boycott of the next elections was submitted to the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership by Shura Council member Abdul Hafith Alawi a month ago.

Among the supporters of the memorandum are IAF Deputies Hamam Said, Abdul Munim Abu Zant, Ahmad Kofahi and Shura Council member Mohammad Abu Faris.

Tawjihi exam results to be tallied by July

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Education Tuesday announced that tawjihi examinations, for students who have completed their secondary school courses, have now officially ended.

A total of 92,221 students sat for examinations in 1,365 halls, according to the ministry.

Director of the Ministry Examination Department Ahmad Salem affirmed that teachers are currently marking papers and evaluating student performances in 84 centres located in different cities.

The students were tested in either literature, science, commerce, industry, agriculture, hotel management, nursing or domestic sciences.

Those students taking tests in Balqa, in which place disturbances occurred last month during the English language exam, are to retake the English examination on Saturday, Mr. Salem confirmed.

Last month's test was cancelled as a group, identified only as residents of Balqa, stormed the examination hall during the allotted period.

According to the Ministry of Education, this group had an answer key in its possession.

Mr. Salem stated that he expects the tawjihi evaluations to be completed and distributed before the end of July so that students might apply for admission to colleges and universities.

The ministry has made arrangements for students currently hospitalised or in reform schools to take their examinations under the supervision of ministry teams.

Meanwhile, the ministry affirmed that it is currently preparing for health education projects in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Head of the Ministry of Education School Health Department Malak Khatib described the programme as directed towards orienting students on health problems and safety. She described the programme as within the framework of a national health plan.

Cabinet approves \$30 m loan agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cabinet Tuesday approved a loan agreement, signed by Jordan and the World Bank, which stipulates the provision of \$30 million in loans to facilitate the government's implementation of a social security net in underprivileged areas and refugee camps. Last December, the government announced plans for implementing a JD 400 million social security package over several years to improve infrastructure and other services in the refugee camps and indigent districts.

A number of ministers have already made tours of the areas slated to benefit from the project.

Upon a recommendation from the Ministry of Planning, the Cabinet also endorsed a draft agreement with Japan under which the Japanese government will allocate \$437,000 in equipment for the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

It additionally approved the ministry's recommendation to designate JD 181,000 to cover the cost of water resource research in the Wadi Araba region.

The Cabinet formed Jordan's delegation to a meeting covering the modernisation of seaports in western Asia. The delegation to the October 27-29 meeting, to be held in Beirut, will be led by Director General of the Jordanian Ports Corporation Mohammad Dalabih.

The Cabinet also formed Jordan's delegation to participate in a conference on global radio to be held in Damascus from July 5 to 10.

It also formed a Ministry of Planning delegation to travel to Luxembourg and negotiate a loan agreement with the European Investment Bank to expand the industrial port within the Aqaba harbour.

The Cabinet convened under the chairmanship of Acting Prime Minister Jawad Anani.

Shoman Foundation honours young researchers

AMMAN (J.T.) — "To motivate and promote scientific work and inspire a generation of Arab scientists capable of contributing to the advancement of the Arab World," the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation yesterday announced the names of the winners of 11 prizes of JD 5,000 each for young Arab researchers.

The 1996 prizes were distributed among 13 persons from eight Arab countries in 12 fields, ranging from mathematics to humanities, engineering and psychology, as well as banking and financial studies.

The announcement was made at a press conference chaired by Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Abdul Majeed Shoman, with Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Director Ibrahim Izzed-dia, and Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation board member Osama Khalidi.

Calling for "more Arab efforts to further research and reach an advanced, distinguished place in science," Mr. Shoman stressed the need for "encouraging and honouring" young scientists of academic excellence.

Dr. Khalidi, who announced the winners' names in his capacity as head of the evaluation committee, told reporters that applicants for the annual prize must be under 40 years of age and have worked for at least three years in an Arab country.

"We take the applicants' working conditions into consideration," Dr. Khalidi explained, emphasising the foundation's intention to encourage promising Arab academics to work in their native countries.

Legal research on AIDS, the 1995 human parts transplant law in the UAE, and the position of Sharia regarding children's rights won Jassim Shamsi, from the UAE, an award for legal and administrative sciences. Professor at Bir Zeit University Ahmad Adel Khair and professor at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Hazim Subhi shared honours for engineering sciences.

For contributions in the field of "innovation and intelligence psychology," Omar Hassan from Sudan was awarded the prize in the field of psychology and education.

Egyptian Hassan Abu



Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation judges announce winners of the various categories of competition in academic and scientific research (Petra photo)

The prize in the field of physics and geology was awarded to 31-year old Naseer Twaï Tét from Algiers, assistant professor at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) University.

Legal research on AIDS, the 1995 human parts transplant law in the UAE, and the position of Sharia regarding children's rights won Jassim Shamsi, from the UAE, an award for legal and administrative sciences.

Professor at Bir Zeit University Ahmad Adel Khair and professor at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Hazim Subhi shared honours for engineering sciences.

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Egyptian Hassan Abu

Ainain, whose unique uro-surgery methods have been applied in many specialised centres world-wide, won accolades for medical sciences.

In the field of mathematics, the prize was awarded to Nabil Shawakfeh, professor at the University of Jordan, but the evaluation committee also officially acknowledged "the distinguished production of Abdullah Rababa," a Jordanian assistant professor at Qatar University.

In light of "his publications and participation in reputed conferences and seminars," the evaluation committee awarded the 1996 Abdul Hameed Shoman Prize in economic, financial, and banking science to Jordan's Riyadh Momani, associate professor at Yarmouk University.

The prize for the field of humanities was shared

between Githa Bin Ali Bin Jeries from Saudi Arabia, and Mohammed Afaya from Morocco.

Assistant Professor at JUST Rida Shibli, won the award in the field of agriculture, while Egypt's Najwa Al-AI was equally lauded for "the ingenuity of her research in organic chemistry."

With research on Sufism, Mohammed Zeidan won the prize for social sciences.

"The prize for life sciences was withheld this year, because none of the candidates was deemed worthy," concluded the evaluation committee's statement.

The Abdul Hameed Shoman Prizes for Young Arab Researchers was first introduced in 1982; 185 winners from various Arab countries have been so far recognised under its auspices.

Man sentenced to death for niece's murder

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Tuesday sentenced a 20-year-old man to death after he was found guilty of molesting and then strangling his niece in Tafleh in February of last year.

The court tribunal declared Ayyesh Salem guilty of molesting and murdering Alia Saad, 12, a shepherdess in the pastures of Afra Spas on Feb. 21.

According to court documents, Mr. Salem, also a shepherd, directed his flock to the place in which his niece was grazing her herd in Afra Spas.

The defendant then pinned his niece to the ground and sexually

assaulted her, transcripts said.

He killed her in order that his crime not be detected, according to the court.

"Mr. Salem choked his niece for half an hour until she fell to the ground and he could ascertain that she was dead," court papers said.

The defendant left the area where he encountered an acquaintance.

He informed his friend that his niece fell from a rock and died, the court said.

The victim's family initially believed the story and wanted to bury their daughter, the court stated. However, they changed their mind and took her to the hospital for an autopsy after her father noticed bruises on the girl's neck.

Also Tuesday, the Criminal Court sentenced a 43-year-old man to an imprisonment term of ten years, after he was found guilty of murdering his son in Ajloun in August of last year.

Radi Abdul Kader was first sentenced to death for killing his son, Hakam, 20 in the town of Hallaweh on Aug. 14, however the penalty was commuted as the victim's mother dropped charges against her husband.

According to transcripts, the victim often quarrelled with his parents, cursed them and attacked his father one day before the incident.

The court maintained that Hakam later dropped several trees in his father's garden, prompting Mr. Abdul Kader to kill his son.

According to transcripts, the defendant woke at dawn on August 14, attended mosque prayers and then returned home where he took possession of a knife.

He then went to his son's house and climbed to the roof where his son, wife and children were sleeping.

"The defendant stabbed his son several times and then turned himself in to police," the court said.

The court stated that it had also resolved to commute the sentence due to the "the victim's bad conduct towards his family."

Both verdicts, handed down by Justices Ahmad Momani, Abdul Hamid Saad and Marwan Dabbas, will automatically be reviewed by a higher court within 30 days.

NEWS IN BRIEF

RSS president meets with Japanese delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Scientific Society (RSS) President Said Alhoush met with a delegation representing the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), headed by JICA Senior Vice President Jin Sadawa, to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation to cover the development and upgrading of RSS systems to better serve development needs in Jordan. Dr. Alhoush maintained that JICA has provided support and equipped the RSS with electronic services and training. The meeting was attended by JICA Deputy Director Kuno Kichiro and Managing Director of JICA Mining and Industrial Development Study Department Takatoshi Hsuoya.

Arab cultural attaches visit VTC

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab cultural attaches in Amman Tuesday paid a visit to the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) where VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah briefed them on the various activities and courses offered to students. Since its establishment, the VTC has trained 110,955 students in various trades. The cultural attaches will visit Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) today upon the university's invitation.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- *Photography exhibition by Jan Kassay, at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until July 29.
- *Fifth exhibition of Korean products at the Amman International Motor Show, until July 7.
- *Paintings by Ali Al Ghoul at Greater Amman Municipality Cultural Department, Ras Al 'Ain, until July 31.
- *"Silver Jewelry exhibition" at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, until July 20.
- *Karim Rasim's works at the Orient Gallery, until July 10.
- *Paintings by contemporary Iraqi artists entitled "Ecology and Environment in Iraqi Art" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until July 12 (except Tuesdays).

Washington, Seoul brace for long Korean peace process

SEOUL (R) — South Korea and the United States Tuesday hailed North Korea's acceptance of four-nation peace talks but immediately braced themselves for a long process of negotiations before any major breakthrough.

North Korea watchers said the famine-threatened North was in such desperate straits that it was seeking aid from South Korea, which it had earlier branded as "a U.S. puppet."

"The government of the Republic of Korea welcomes that the DPRK (North Korea)...has accepted the proposal for the four-party talks," Seoul Foreign Ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-Hyung said in a statement.

Communist North Korea formally agreed Monday to a meeting on Aug. 5 of senior officials from the two Koreas, the United States and China to set an agenda and other procedural details for peace talks.

The North, with its economy in ruins, has previously linked its participation to a

specific commitment on food aid and an end to U.S. trade sanctions. Seoul and Washington maintain such assistance could be discussed during the talks.

"We're very pleased with this agreement and we look forward to having this go forward," Deputy U.S. National Security Adviser James Steinberg said in Hong Kong.

Mr. Steinberg was accompanying Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at ceremonies in Hong Kong marking the July 1 transfer of the territory from British to Chinese control.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said in Tokyo that he hoped the peace talks would be held "at the earliest possible time."

Kwak Tae-Hwan, director of the Private Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said it was time for Washington and Seoul to offer concessions to Pyongyang to encourage compromises.

"North Korea is changing a lot these days because of its dire food problem," he said. "This could bring

about a turning point for peace in Korea if more flexibility is allowed."

U.S. and South Korean officials said engagement by reclusive Pyongyang in serious negotiations to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula would contribute to security in Asia.

But they cautioned against expectations of quick results.

"The four-party talks proposal intends to initiate the process of establishing a permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, including replacement of the current armistice agreement with a new regime," Mr. Lee said.

The 1953 ceasefire pact ended fighting but did not technically end the three-year Korean War, which pitted the North, backed by China, against the South, supported by the U.S.-led United Nations.

Park Sung-Hoon, senior analyst on the North at Seoul's Unification Ministry said Pyongyang's main purpose was to get Washington to take steps to promote investment in the

North.

"The North has insisted the four-nation talks be held in New York where they keep their experts on the U.S.," Mr. Park said. "A North Korean delegation would probably seek bilateral talks with the U.S. whenever they visit New York for the peace talks."

Mr. Lee said Seoul did not expect to achieve détente with the North soon. "It is important to keep North Korea engaged in dialogue and take gradual steps to build up confidence."

Mr. Steinberg told reporters in Hong Kong that getting the Stalinist North to the bargaining table had been a lengthy process with many false starts. The four-nation talks were proposed by Washington and Seoul more than a year ago.

"But we take it one step at a time because it's been something that we've recognised all along... is (a) difficult road to go forward and we hope finally this will represent a serious engagement on the four-party process," he said.

U.N.: 6 Afghans in Turkmenistan die from dehydration, gunshots

GENEVA (AFP) — Six Afghan refugees among up to 10,000 sheltering in a desolate area of Turkmenistan have died from dehydration and gunshot wounds, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman said here Monday.

Between 8,000 and 10,000 Afghan refugees of Turkmen origin have crossed the Murghab River into Turkmenistan in the past week to flee fighting in Afghanistan involving Taliban Islamic militants. Fer-

nando Del Mundo said.

The refugees, mostly women and children, are gathered in a "desolate no-man's land" some 25 kilometres south of the village of Taktabazar.

One group of 2,300 are on a hill, exposed to intense heat. By the time a UNHCR team was able to gain access to the refugees Saturday, six deaths had been reported.

Mr. Del Mundo said, adding the agency had begun helping the homeless move to a safer area.

"Some refugees carried livestock and indicated they

did not plan to go back to Afghanistan any time soon. They fear harassment from Taliban forces if they return now," he said.

The UNHCR, along with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) and the Red Cross are providing food, water and medical services to the refugees.

A UNHCR official said last week the Taliban had captured several villages close to the Murghab River in Afghanistan, and that the Maruchak village on the frontier was now controlled by the Islamic militia.

Kazakhstan becomes part of world drug web — U.N.

ALMATY (R) — Kazakhstan has become caught up in the international drug trade and the former Soviet republic has the largest potential in the world for producing cannabis, United Nations and Kazakh officials said Tuesday.

"The problem of cannabis is extremely significant for Kazakhstan, because there is no larger potential for its production than in Kazakhstan," Herbert Behrstock, U.N. resident coordinator in Kazakhstan, told a news conference.

Presenting the latest U.N. drug report, Mr. Behrstock said that cannabis — produced in large quantities across Central Asia — remains the most used drug in the world. "This is a warning for all of us," he said.

Nurlan Abdirov, head of Kazakhstan's recently formed State Drug Control Committee, said cannabis was grown in huge amounts in the vast Chu Valley which Kazakhstan shares with Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Abdirov said cannabis is grown on at least 138,000 hectares in Kazakhstan and on a further 60,000 hectares in Kyrgyzstan.

"But Kazakhstan has also become a transit country in the international drug trade," he told the same news conference.

Mr. Abdirov said that narcotics — mostly cheap raw opium from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran — are transported across Kazakh territory to Russia and then further to Europe.

The borders of Kazakhstan — a huge country of rolling steppes five times the size of France but with a population of just 16.7 million people — pose little obstacle to international drug traders, he said.

Last year Kazakh police intercepted 12 tonnes of drugs transported via Kazakhstan. "In the first five months of this year we seized already 17 tonnes of drugs," Mr. Abdirov said.

"Most probably, this is just a tiny bit of what passes across Kazakhstan. Nobody knows what the real amount of this drug transit is," he said, adding that recently the police seized large amounts of heroin, one of the most potent and expensive narcotics.

What also worries the Central Asian state is "the absence of a sharply negative attitude to the use of drugs" among the population, Mr. Abdirov said.



Mexico's towering Popocatepetl volcano, shown February 1997, spewed a giant cloud of ash over the Mexico City metropolis Monday. Interior Ministry officials denied that they issued a red alert on the volcano, although high-ranking government officials had previously broadcast the warning on national television. The capital's international airport had been temporarily shut down because of the ash (Reuters photo)

Volcano belches giant ash cloud over Mexico City

MEXICO CITY (R) — The Popocatepetl volcano sent a cloud of ash and acid gases over Mexico's sprawling metropolis Monday in its biggest explosion in 70 years.

A mushroom that formed above the crater blew across the city causing a drizzle of dirty black ash that clogged car windscreens and forced the closure of Mexico's main airport.

Alarmed residents complained of burning eyes and throats.

Authorities urged the city's 18 million residents to stay indoors and close their doors and windows. Those who needed to go outside were advised to wear goggles and a face mask.

Mexico City drivers, forced to repeatedly get out to wipe their windscreens,

were stuck in traffic jams for hours.

The majestic, snow-capped Popocatepetl stands 5,500 metres high about 50 kilometres southeast of the Mexican capital and is visible on clear days.

During the 35 minutes of fiercest activity starting at 5.55 p.m. (2255 GMT), burning rocks pounded down the volcano's sides, threatening nearby villages.

Ash blew mostly eastwards, landing as far away as the Gulf of Mexico port of Veracruz, some 260 kilometres away.

Some authorities announced a red alert and prepared to evacuate people living near the volcano. But emergency officials quickly denied they had issued a red alert, which means the volcano is becoming "danger-

ously unstable."

"There was confusion. There never was a red alert," Ricardo Garcia Vilalobos, undersecretary for civil protection at the Interior Ministry, told the news conference.

Interior Minister Emilio Chauffet said authorities were standing by to evacuate people if the volcano grew seriously volatile again, but he said its activity had dropped notably.

Experts said "Popo," as the mountain is affectionately known, registered its most violent activity since 1925.

The volcano has blown out ash and steam on numerous occasions this year, but Monday's explosion marked the first time the

grit-like ash reached Mexico City.

"It feels like sand. It gets into your throat and your teeth. We've never seen anything like this," said Maria Del Carmen Ariaga, as she watched the blanket of ash fall.

Authorities closed the capital's international airport, diverting flights to the Pacific resort of Acapulco.

Closer to Popo's firing line were villagers in hundreds of humble farming communities on the volcano's southern flanks.

Troops and emergency personnel were rushed to 30 villages at the foot of Popocatepetl in preparation for an evacuation.

But inhabitants said they were reluctant to leave their homes for shelters in case their possessions were burgled.

Bosnian Serb leader says rivals plot against her

PALE (R) — Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic accused hardliners Monday of trying to oust her and said indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic was still running the government.

She spoke to independent Belgrade radio station B-92 after Serb sources said she was detained overnight by government opponents trying to sabotage her attempts to crack down on high-level corruption in Bosnia's Serb Republic.

Mrs. Plavsic did not confirm she was held against her will but she spent the night in the northeastern town of Bijeljina meeting party and military officials at a hotel heavily guarded by police.

Asked by B-92 if she thought she was the victim of a coup, she said: "Yes, I do."

She later travelled by Serb army helicopter to her office in Banja Luka and witnesses said NATO troops had helped secure her route to the airfield. A NATO spokesman said peacekeeping troops were "monitoring the situation very closely" but provided no escort.

Mrs. Plavsic said she was preparing a report which would show "who is actually running the Bosnian Serb Republic" and identified Mr. Karadzic who was "telling people to obstruct state institutions."

She replaced Mr. Karadzic as president last year when the international community forced him from public office for his conduct of the 1992-95 Bosnian War.

Mr. Karadzic has continued to wield political and economic influence from behind the scenes in collaboration with Momcilo Krajisnik, the Serb member of Bosnia's multi-ethnic collective presidency.

Bosnian Serb Television, controlled by Mr. Karadzic and Mr. Krajisnik, slammed Mrs. Plavsic in its Monday evening broadcast, denying any coup was under way and accusing Mrs. Plavsic of spreading lies.

"We have to say that the president of the Serb Republic is deceiving the public," the television said.

Tensions were running high in Serb territory as police from recently disbanded units guarded Mrs. Plavsic's offices in Banja Luka. Power briefly went out in the city Monday evening, which was seen as a warning from hardliners that they were in control.

Mrs. Plavsic told B-92 she did not want either NATO peacekeepers or the Bosnian Serb army to intervene in her conflict with the hardliners which became public when she failed at the weekend to secure the dismissal of Interior Minister Dragan Kijac.

She accused Mr. Kijac, a Karadzic loyalist, of refusing to investigate two large Bosnian Serb companies associated with the former president and Mr. Krajisnik.

Leaders of Mr. Karadzic's party met in the mountain village of Pale outside Sarajevo to discuss their strategy while diplomats waited to see if Mrs. Plavsic would retain her post.

Japan blocks Taiwanese boat near disputed isles

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Coast Guard Tuesday turned back a Taiwanese fishing boat which tried to approach Japanese-held islands in the East China Sea disputed by both Taiwan and China, a spokesman said.

The spokesman for the Maritime Safety Agency said the Taiwanese boat, with about 14 people aboard, was steaming towards the main island in

the chain, called Senkakus in Japanese and Diaoyus in Chinese.

Coast Guard patrol vessels stopped the Taiwanese boat at a point 6.5 kilometres from the main island early Tuesday, the agency spokesman said.

Four of those aboard the Taiwanese boat tried to jump aboard an MSA patrol boat and some others threw plastic bottles at the coastguard boat but the

Taiwanese boat motored away after the hour-long skirmish, he said. No one was injured.

"It appears they tried to land on the island to coincide with the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule," the spokesman said.

China says the uninhabited islets have been Chinese territory for centuries while Japan's claim goes back to 1894. The isles are rich in fish

and the area may hold undiscovered oil deposits.

The row over the islands have ignited nationalist passions in Chinese communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan since a Japanese right-wing group built a makeshift lighthouse there in July 1996, a move they said bolstered Japan's sovereignty.



Two Albanian women, dressed in black, and a girl walk in front of an Italian Multinational Protection Forces tank positioned in the centre of the rebellious port town of Vlora Tuesday. European envoy Franz Vranitzky, welcoming Albania's election as a vital first step towards normality in the chaotic Balkan republic, said Tuesday the international community must now follow through with economic support (Reuters photo)



Police take cover from rocks thrown by university students during the ongoing protests against the National Assembly plans to cut back on educational funding. About 25 people were injured in the protests, according to the Red Cross (Reuters photo)

Clashes erupt as Nicaragua holds national dialogue

MANAGUA (AFP) — University students and riot police clashed violently in the streets of Managua just as President Arnoldo Aleman was holding a "national dialogue" to solve rising unrest in the country.

At least two police officers were injured and 30 students were arrested in two clashes Monday outside Managua's Central American University and at the Agrarian University, 20 kilometres north of here. Red Cross officials said.

The fighting broke out as riot police were called in to disperse student protest marches against the government's education budget, which at one point dropped from \$36 million to \$30 million by presidential veto.

The disturbance broke shortly after a summit called by Mr. Aleman to advise the government on ways to cure Nicaragua's

social and economic ills got under way.

During three hours, fierce street battles were fought with students lobbing stones and home-made grenades and police responding with tear gas and rubber bullets.

The clashes ended at nightfall with a truce negotiated by university authorities and police, who drew back from the university campus where many demonstrators remained holed up.

The unrest began Thursday after Congress backed Mr. Aleman's veto of an education budget he deemed inflated at \$36 million, sending it below the level of six per cent of the gross domestic product, which students were demanding be maintained.

The government later promised to return to the original funding, only to incur more student wrath by

saying it would disburse the money directly to the universities rather than to the National University Council, in apparent violation of laws ensuring the autonomy of the universities.

Meanwhile, several political parties, economic interest groups and the Roman Catholic Church were participating in a summit called by Mr. Aleman to seek solutions to social problems lingering since the end of the decade-long Sandinista regime in 1989.

The "national dialogue," however, got under way without the country's labour unions and the opposition Sandinista Party, whose leader and former President Daniel Ortega, claims the government is not interested in seeking any real solutions.

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Aleman called for "words over bullets and vio-

lence," saying that the Nicaraguan people "are tired of living in constant unrest and uncertainty."

Since Mr. Aleman took office in January, after defeating Mr. Ortega in elections in October, the Sandinistas staged a national strike in April paralysing public transport around the country for several days.

The Sandinistas have promised more strikes and unrest during the national dialogue, which is expected to kick off in earnest next week after a committee of intellectuals set up by Mr. Aleman establishes an agenda.

The Sandinistas oppose the president's attempts to privatise state-owned companies, slash the government payroll and return property confiscated under the leftist Sandinista regime in the 1980s to former owners.

Pakistan assembly bans MPs from crossing floor

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan's National Assembly (lower house) passed a constitutional amendment Tuesday designed to prevent parliamentarians from changing sides.

The 217-seat assembly voted 181-0 in favour of the bill, which was passed by the Senate (upper house) Monday.

"This bill is intended to provide against defection of elected members with a view to obtaining a clean and honourable political state of affairs," the bill stated.

The change means a parliamentarian may lose his seat if he breaches party discipline, votes against the party line or abstains from voting, in a way that contravenes party policy.

The amendment greatly

enhances the power of party leaders with regard to their parliamentary groups.

Once a party's disciplinary committee acts against an alleged defector, the MP concerned may appeal only to his party leader, whose decision overrides that of any court in the land.

"Notwithstanding anything contained in the constitution, no court, including the Supreme Court and a High Court, shall entertain any legal proceedings, exercise any jurisdiction or make any order in relation to any action under this article (of the constitution)," the amendment says.

Pakistani parliamentarians have in the past sometimes changed their loyalties for political advantage, amid accusations of bribery, intimidation and other mal-

practices.

"It was part of our manifesto," Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told the National Assembly after the vote. "Our politics was tainted to a point where it had no parallel in the Third World."

It was the second constitutional amendment passed by Mr. Sharif's government since it took power after February elections gave it more than a two-thirds parliamentary majority.

On April 1, the Senate and National Assembly unanimously passed a constitutional amendment stripping the president of his controversial powers to dismiss assemblies, sack government and appoint military chiefs and provincial governors.

President Farooq Leghari, who had sacked Benazir

Bhutto's government in November on disputed charges of corruption and misuse, said he was not upset at losing her powers.

During her three years in office, Ms. Bhutto often urged Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, then in opposition, to join forces with her to achieve the two-thirds majority needed to pass constitutional changes both parties wanted, but their bitter political rivalry prevented any such cooperation.

Naveed Qamar, former finance minister in Ms. Bhutto's government, said her Pakistan People's Party supported the amendment, but added it had increased the responsibility of party leaders to ensure that justice was done to floor-crossers.

Sri Lankan refugee ship destroyed by rebels

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Tiger separatists Tuesday boarded a ship used to ferry refugees in northwestern Sri Lanka and destroyed it by setting it on fire, naval officials said.

They said five Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) boats attacked the passenger ship at Pesalai in Mannar, 240 kilometres north of the capital Colombo, and abducted the crew before torching the ship.

Only the crew was on board when the ship was attacked by the rebels at 6.30 a.m. (0030 GMT), the officials said.

"It was a private ship which could carry 250 passengers. But at the time of the attack, only the crew was on board since it was coming to Mannar to take refugees to Jaffna Peninsula," a navy official told Reuters.

Officials said the ship, the Misen, was anchored some distance off Pesalai. Its crew of nine included two Indonesians, one of whom was the captain and the other the chief engineer. The rest were Sri Lankans.

The ship, which had been recently hired by Sri Lanka's Rehabilitation Ministry from a private company to take refugees to the northern Jaffna Peninsula from Mannar, had been gutted by fire, navy officials said.

An LTTE spokesman in London was not immediately available for comment.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said another ship named Taraki, which also is used to take refugees to the Jaffna peninsula, escaped the attack because the rebels fled when they saw naval gunboats approaching.

"They (rebels) don't want people to return to Jaffna and for life in the peninsula to become normal. They want to show the world that the people of Jaffna cannot live under government rule," he said.

"But that is not correct. People want to return to Jaffna and live under government rule," the spokesman told Reuters.

Government troops captured the former LTTE stronghold of Jaffna last year. The fighting displaced thousands of civilians and pushed the rebels southward into the brush jungles of the Wanni.

The government has been sending the refugees, who are living in camps in northern government-held areas, by ship to their homes on the peninsula. A strategic highway linking Jaffna to the rest of the island has still to be opened by the military.

Irish premier in Belfast for talks ahead of flashpoint Protestant parade

BELFAST (AFP) — New Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern was leading a team of Irish ministers here Tuesday for key talks ahead of one of the flashpoints in Northern Ireland's "Marching Season."

Mr. Ahern, who took office in Dublin less than a week ago, was to be briefed by Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam on attempts still being made to find a compromise over the controversial parades that last year led to province-wide violence.

The meeting — Mr. Ahern's first with any foreign government minister since he came to office — comes just days before Sunday's parade at Drumcree, a small village near Portadown southwest of Belfast. Last year the Protestant Orange Order March was banned by police but they later relented following a violent and tense standoff and it went ahead, to the fury of Roman Catholic residents.

The resulting violence spread across Northern Ireland, leaving one person dead, 300 injured and causing millions of pounds (dollars) damage.

Mr. Ahern will round off a hectic first week of Northern Ireland engagements with more detailed exchanges on the peace process with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London Thursday.

Meanwhile, a delegation of Americans arrived in Northern Ireland Monday to act as observers at parades, and appealed for people to back away from violence.

The group, including former New York police chiefs and New York City Financial Controller Alan Hevesi, held separate talks with Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Féin, the IRA's political wing, the leader of the moderate Nationalist Socialist Democratic Labour Party John Hume and Unionists.

Japan's working women face worse harassment — report

TOKYO (R) — Japanese working women suffer from sexual harassment and obstacles to equal opportunity at worse levels than women in other industrialised nations, a government report said Tuesday.

Natori Haniwa, director of the Office for Gender Equality, which compiled the report, said Japan lagged behind Europe and the United States in providing equal opportunity and said Japanese women should be given more say in shaping public policy.

"The principal cause of the lag behind other developed countries is the low percentage of women's participation in the policy- and decision-making process, especially in the public sector," Ms. Haniwa told a news conference.

As one measure, Ms. Haniwa's office proposed raising the proportion of women members in government advisory panels from the current 16.6 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2000.

Women accounted for only 7.6 per cent of members of parliament, compared with Sweden where 40.4 per cent of lawmakers are women, the report said.

On average, women workers earned 60 per cent of what men make because of lower positions within an organisation and shorter years of service compared with their male counterparts.

The report was the first progress check on the government's Plan for Gender Equality 2000, drafted last year and aimed at improving women's access to all levels of society.

In a society still clinging to the rigid gender roles of the working father and the housewife mother, many working women were pressured into leaving their jobs after childbirth because husbands did not share in housework, Ms. Haniwa said.

"In comparison to Europe and America, Japanese men devote a significantly longer amount of time to paid

work but a remarkably shorter amount of time to housework," she said.

Japanese husbands spend on average around 20 minutes per day doing household chores regardless of whether the wife worked outside the home or not, she added.

The report said widespread sexual harassment at work, proliferation of sex in the media and growing teenage prostitution showed that Japanese society lacked respect for women's human rights, making it more difficult for women to advance in the workplace.

A 1996 National Police Agency survey showed that the proportion of teenagers selling sex rose to one-third of all reported cases of prostitution.

The report also quoted a 1992 survey by the Japan Institute of Workers' Evolution, which said about 26 per cent of women had suffered sexual harassment in the workplace over the preceding two-year period, she said.

Brazzaville combat reerupts as president returns

KINSHASA (AFP) — Heavy shelling hammered the Congolese capital of Brazzaville Monday, burying hopes raised after a brief break in hostilities in the Central African nation, riven by a bloody power struggle between forces loyal to the current president and his predecessor.

President Pascal Lissouba meanwhile spent the day in Kinshasa, across the Congo River in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo to attend that country's 37 years of independence from Belgium colonisation.

A member of the presidential security contingent said by telephone from the shattered capital that Mr. Lissouba's plane had landed safely at the international airport and he had been safely transported back to his residence.

Government troops loyal to Mr. Lissouba and militia fighting for former President Denis Sassou Nguesso have been fighting over the strategic facility since violence broke out June 5.

Francois Ibovi, a spokesman for Mr. Sassou Nguesso, accused government troops of breaking the brief truce.

"They fired shells into northern parts of the city" from the airport, he said.

Mr. Lissouba's security officer contradicted that, saying rather it was the militia which "fired mortars against army positions."

Earlier, French Ambassa-

dor Raymond Cesaire told AFP the government soldiers "control two-thirds" of the airport, including the control tower and "a good part of the runway," with the militia holding the rest.

At the time, he had also confirmed comments by Congolese Communication Minister Sophie Moukoko-you that calm had descended on the city late morning — the time that Mr. Lissouba was in Kinshasa.

A ceasefire agreed between the two sides two weeks ago has been routinely broken by automatic and heavy weapons fire, with only a few brief periods of truce.

Shelling had continued all Sunday night, before ceasing at dawn.

Mediators fear the soldiers in the street are increasingly ignoring orders and making their own combat decisions.

Meanwhile, Congolese Foreign Minister Destin Tsaty Boungou claimed on state radio that "what's happening today in Congo is the result of a plot by groups and international financial circles which are supporting former Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso."

He added: "Today's fighting has a financial goal. Sassou Nguesso wouldn't have been able to amass so many weapons and recruit so many mercenaries without financial support."

Tsaty Boungou said the unnamed backers were

already managing some of Congo's wealth and were unhappy with Mr. Lissouba's programme of "transparency."

He added however that he had no proof.

It is the first time the Congolese government has accused outside forces of creating the current conflict.

In 1993, during another outbreak of hostilities, Mr. Lissouba accused French oil giant Elf-Aquitaine of manufacturing the crisis to protect its interests — an allegation rejected by the company.

Meanwhile, the warring factions in Congo are practising ethnic cleansing, eliminating those who do not belong to the "right" ethnic group, witnesses said here.

Heavily-armed government troops who control the districts of M'filou and Diata south of the capital and part of the city centre where they systematically check everyone who passes.

Anyone whose name indicates they belong to the Mbochi people, the same as Mr. Sassou Nguesso, is arrested, taken to a secret spot and shot, witnesses said.

On Friday a woman aged 20 who was heading from the southern district of Baongo to the northern suburb of Ouenze was stopped at a checkpoint on the edge of Baongo, near the French Cultural Centre.

A witness said she was shot at point-blank range by

an excited soldier after failing to produce an identity card.

"She has no identity. She is certainly a Mbochi. I am going to make her travel for ever," the soldier was quoted as saying before killing the woman as other civilians looked on helplessly.

Without an identity card, a person must have a mother-tongue other than those spoken by Mr. Sassou Nguesso's supporters, witnesses said.

The other camp employs similar practices at road blocks in the districts of Ouenze and Talangai.

Anyone born in the southern Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou regions, known as Nibolek, Mr. Lissouba's electoral stronghold, or seems by their name to come from there, is also eliminated.

On Saturday at the Tsieme crossroads in Ouenze a militiaman executed a middle-aged man with no identity card and unable to speak any northern language.

"He's a Nibo, he infiltrated us," the militiaman said before taking his victim to an isolated spot and executing him.

In the respective districts they hold Mr. Lissouba's men have looted and destroyed the homes of northerners, while Mr. Sassou Nguesso's supporters blew up the houses of southerners with dynamite, forcing their occupants to flee across the front line.

Arkansas trooper says many Clinton tales 'untrue'

NEW YORK (R) — An Arkansas state trooper interviewed in this week's New Yorker magazine said many stories attributed to state troopers about President Bill Clinton's reputed extramarital affairs were not true.

Ronald Anderson, a member of then-Arkansas Governor Clinton's security detail, said in a 1994 affidavit released to the magazine that, in early discussions about a possible book deal, he had confirmed stories regarding Mr. Clinton's alleged infidelity although he knew they were untrue.

He said he knew many of those stories either "to be untrue" or that he had no first-hand knowledge of them.

While he said he could not discredit all the stories, he said many "were nothing more than old fish tales, with little, if any, basis in fact." The affidavit was made by Mr. Clinton's lawyers.

Mr. Anderson's revelations appear in an article about the case filed against Mr. Clinton by Paula Jones, a former Arkansas state employee who is suing the president for alleged sexual harassment. Mr. Clinton has denied the alle-

gations.

The state trooper said he confirmed the stories about Mr. Clinton because after the 1992 Democratic Convention, he and other troopers believed they could make money by selling their stories to a book publisher.

Mr. Anderson also said a longtime political foe of Mr. Clinton's, an Arkansas attorney named Cliff Jackson, urged the troopers to release their stories to magazine and newspaper reporters.

In exchange, Mr. Anderson said in the magazine that the attorney offered them jobs outside Arkansas for seven years at an annual salary of \$100,000.

Mr. Anderson told the New Yorker he would not sign a release because of the "lies and inaccuracies" in the other troopers' stories.

Mr. Jackson told Reuters that Mr. Anderson's allegations were "just ridiculous," but said he had offered to help the troopers get jobs if they got fired. "It was never necessary," he said.

2 held in U.S. on nuclear arms charges

MIAMI (R) — Two Lithuanian men have been arrested in Miami on charges of plotting to sell nuclear and other weapons to U.S. undercover agents posing as Colombian drug dealers, customs officials said Monday.

No weapons were actually delivered, Dennis Fagan, acting special agent in charge of the Miami customs region, said.

The suspects, Alexander Progrebeski and Alexander Darichev, pleaded not

guilty before a federal magistrate Monday on charges of conspiring to ship explosive materials and missiles without a licence and conspiring to unlawfully transfer nuclear materials.

Both were ordered jailed without bond. The suspects were arrested Friday afternoon at a hotel near the U.S. Customs Office in Miami and mistakenly described earlier Monday as Russians by a customs spokesman.

Customs agents arrested

the pair before they could complete the shipment of Russian Strela and Igla missiles to Puerto Rico because investigators worried the shipment would go astray.

The missiles are shoulder-fired, portable, surface-to-air missiles commonly known in the West as the Sam-14 (Strela) and Sam-16 (Igla).

"We could not guarantee the safety or integrity of the weapons," Mr. Fagan said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1974
مجلس تحرير يومية عربية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Strategy has flaws

SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS have tried over the past three decades to increase the number of high school students enrolled in vocational training courses to reduce the glut of those pursuing university degrees and steering more towards trades. The strategy in itself has been well-meaning, particularly as the country faces significant unemployment and poverty. The announcement that the Ministry of Education plans to form a central committee to increase trade awareness among the next generation of job-seekers is valuable, yet somewhat overdue. And efforts to expand vocational training into regular academic schools, while targeting the job market needs of the Kingdom are ambitious but necessary. First of all, attracting not only the youth, but convincing their parents on the idea of a trade career, has been an arduous task.

Nearly 10 years ago, prominent film producer/director Adnan Ramahi approached principals in various sectors with an idea to produce a series of short documentaries for television featuring Jordanians in their real life on-the-job trades. His vision was to film the subjects at work and at home and let them describe in their own words the nature of their jobs, the satisfaction they derive from their work, and the importance that their jobs play in the peoples' lives and the larger scheme of things. But Ramahi, met with uninterested, if not outright, negative responses from the authorities. He left Jordan less than a year later and has been successfully producing films in Germany.

The point here is that had a simple idea been allowed to develop at the onset, we may have been well along in our vocational trades sector. Nevertheless, the Ramahi idea may still be worth exploring, especially as television provides access to an expansive audience. Care should be taken as well to train students in needed fields. But the concept of providing loans to vocational training graduates to start small private businesses could be self-defeating. We need industries to create the jobs and promote exports. If we have the skilled human resources to do the job, then we will be able to attract industries to the Kingdom. It is all too often that an eager, aspiring entrepreneur takes the plunge into a private small venture only to fail, shut down, and fret over how to repay the loans. The vocational training institutions would do well to work not only to train but to promote the readiness of a skilled and enthusiastic human resource force.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm Tuesday welcomed the government's new measures to liberalise the economy by allowing investors to take out or bring in any amount of Jordanian or foreign currencies and gold. But he said that this is only one step to encourage investors and the country is in need of real infrastructure that can attract investments. Taher Adwan said that the government ought to follow the example of Egypt and other countries which have started to attract investors by offering land free of charge to the investors to set up free zones and provided other facilities, like modern and effective road networks and telecommunications services. For investments to be successful, they are also in need of a free media climate, with the press allowed more freedom, and in need of real facilities not only at the borders and the airports but also when they start their investment schemes in the country.

A Writer for Al Ra'i attacked Israel for triggering a religious war by defaming Prophet Mohammad in posters plastered on Hebron stores. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the already explosive situation in Hebron and other parts of the occupied territories is bound to show further tension that leads to acts of violence as a result of Israel's atrocities and crimes. Hebron already witnessed early signs of this war when a settler sprayed bullets in the Ibrahim Mosque killing scores of Muslim worshippers and triggering a new wave of violence that contributed to ruining the peace process. The Jewish fundamentalism, said the writer, is playing a sinister role in starting a religious war and the Jewish settlers in Hebron serve as a tool in the hands of the fundamentalists in the drive to attain their evil objectives in Palestine, the writer said. The new developments in Hebron, the writer said, are very serious and coincide with Israel's adamant drive to pursue the settlement programmes that have been condemned by the world community as undermining the prospects of peace.

Washington Watch

As peace process drifts, American public opinion shifts towards balance

RESULTS OF a new poll demonstrate that U.S. public opinion continues to move towards greater balance in its understanding of Middle East issues.

In three distinct areas of investigation — including evaluations of U.S. allies in the Middle East, the Middle East peace process, and the U.S. Middle East foreign aid programme — U.S. voters display almost total balance in their attitudes.

The June 1997 poll was conducted for the Arab American Institute (AAI) by Zogby International of New York. With 1,012 registered voters polled, the results have a high degree of accuracy, with a margin of error of +/-3.2 per cent.

These AAI poll results both build on and affirm findings of a number of other polls conducted over the past several months, all of which point to a continuing movement of public opinion towards a balanced view of the Middle East.

The results:
The value of U.S. allies in the Middle East

The most striking results of the AAI poll came when U.S. voters were asked to rate the importance to the United States of four Middle East countries. Saudi Arabia topped Israel as well as Egypt and Jordan.

Thirty-six point five per cent assessed Saudi Arabia as a "very valuable ally" and about 40 per cent thought Saudi Arabia was "somewhat valuable." That total of over 76 per cent was higher than Israel's combined total of 74.5 per cent. Thirty-five per cent thought Israel was "very valuable" and 39.5 per cent thought it was "somewhat valuable."

While the Saudi edge

over Israel is a slight 1.5 per cent, it nevertheless represents an important breakthrough for the kingdom. During the 1970s and 80s, Israel's ratings more than doubled those of Saudi Arabia. Even after the Gulf war, Israel's ratings still edged out all Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia.

The fact that U.S. voters' appreciation of the U.S.-Saudi relationship continues to grow, despite persistent negative press accounts, is significant.

The other Arab countries included in the poll, Egypt and Jordan, were also rated valuable as U.S. allies. Egypt's combined score was 65.6 per cent and Jordan's rating was 59.6 per cent.

The U.S. foreign aid programme
Voters show an equal degree of support for and opposition to U.S. foreign aid to Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

About 21 per cent believe that U.S. aid to the PNA is either "just the right amount" or "should be increased" — the exact same number that supports the U.S. programme for Israel. On the other hand, 63 per cent of those polled feel that the Palestinian aid programme is too high, while 64 per cent feels Israel receives too much aid.

U.S. aid to Egypt is supported by 18 per cent, with 66 per cent feeling that the amount is too high.

This near balance in support of aid to all three countries is noteworthy in light of recent congressional votes to punish the Palestinians and Egypt. The attacks on both were quite intense, as were the threats to retaliate

by cutting their U.S. support levels.

By focusing only on Egypt and the PNA, and refraining from criticising the high level of U.S. aid to Israel, Congress is clearly out of touch with public opinion.

In general, the U.S. public is opposed to all foreign aid. The untouchable nature of Israel's aid programme is a function of congressional politics and not a reflection of public support.

"In general, the U.S. public is opposed to all foreign aid. The untouchable nature of Israel's aid programme is a function of congressional politics and not a reflection of public support."

The Middle East peace process

Continuing the trend that was first observed in the April 1997 Zogby poll, American voters held both Palestinians and Israelis to blame for the impasse in the peace process. Thirteen per cent blame Israel, 19 per cent blame the Palestinians, but 42 per cent said both parties are equally to blame.

When asked whom the U.S. administration should pressure "to get the peace process moving again," 4 per cent said Israel, 4 per cent said the Palestinians, and 44.5 per cent said both should be pressured equally. Once again, there is evidence that U.S. voters are displaying a new sense of balance.

What makes these results important is not only the fact that they reflect continuing movement of U.S. opinion in the direction of

balanced concern made by President Clinton have also played a role in helping to bring about this shift in public opinion. It is, therefore, significant to note that this shift occurs as the Clinton administration weighs policy options in an effort to salvage a floundering Middle East peace process. While the administration is coming under some domestic criticism for its apparent passivity, there are indications that the president and his advisors are deeply concerned with the collapse of the process and the dangers that a collapse poses to U.S. allies and interests in the broader region.

Recent public comments by the president and comments by some White House and State Department officials make it clear that the president is actively engaged in discussing options to deal

with the crisis.

Weighing heavily on the administration is the realisation that U.S. vital interests are at stake, should the drift in the Middle East continue. Absent movement towards peace, there are dangerous developments that can lead the region towards renewed conflict. There is also grave concern that should the three and a half-year-old effort collapse, there will be a loss of confidence in the possibility of achieving a negotiated settlement. Should this occur, the U.S. will have squandered significant political assets which can threaten its future standing in the region.

In this context, recent warnings by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah have served as an important reminder that concerns over the fate of the peace process are shared by an important U.S. ally.

Also weighing heavily on the administration, of course, is the highly unstable internal political situation in Israel and the reaction that any dramatic U.S. initiative will generate from pro-Israel forces in the U.S. and in Congress.

Shifts in American opinion should, therefore, tell Washington that American voters will support a balanced and firm approach to peace and will welcome an even-handed U.S. plan to restore momentum and confidence in the peace process.

The ability of hardline anti-peace advocates to influence U.S. public attitudes is limited. A strong "display" of leadership, will receive strong public support.

'The battle for Jerusalem — proof that religion should never be mixed with politics'

By G.H. Jansen

LAST WEEK'S report by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on Israel's construction of a new Jewish settlement on the hill of Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa was severely condemnatory of that action and demanded that Israel cease work at the site. Such condemnation was inevitable since the Israelis are in flagrant violation of a General Assembly resolution, passed by a vote of 134 to three with 11 abstentions, calling on the Jewish state to cease construction forthwith.

The secretary general's condemnation of the Israeli action is quite specific because he cited political, geographic, demographic and economic factors as well as the negative effects of the building on the peace process, when calling for the cessation of Israeli construction.

It is, of course, nothing new for Israel to ignore U.N. demands, which it does regularly. Israel can afford to do so with impunity as long as it has the backing and support of the U.S., which is forthcoming in this particular case in spite of the fact that, as a result of the construction, the peace process has been frozen.

We can now expect the Israelis and the Americans to mount a propaganda campaign against the secretary general as they did against his predecessor after he released a report critical of the Jewish state.

The skirmishing over Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa is just one episode in the running "battle for Jerusalem". The main Palestinian objection to the new settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim is that it completes a ring of Israeli townships around Jerusalem and

cuts it off from Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank, from those to the north of Jerusalem, like Ramallah and Nablus, and from those to the south, like Bethlehem and Hebron.

An Israeli official, a publicity adviser to the Israeli mayor of West Jerusalem who conducted this journalism to the site, made no bones about saying that the strategic reason for building at Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa was to prevent the Palestinian autonomous area from "spilling over" into Jerusalem, which is designated by Israel as the "eternal, undivided capital" of the Jewish people. Israelis put forward this claim in spite of the fact that Israelis, even in daylight, are too afraid of the Palestinians to enter Arab East Jerusalem.

While we stood on a nearby hilltop and watched the bulldozers devour Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa, this spokesman, Amos Radian, gave specious answers to the question of why Israel was not willing to accept the fair and generous Palestinian suggestion to "share" Jerusalem with the Palestinians, resolving the ownership and sovereignty issues. He began by saying that the Palestinians had no locus standing in Jerusalem because they never had had any sovereignty in the holy city, an assertion which is factually correct, as Jerusalem was never the capital of a Palestinian state, but historically false, because Jerusalem was the regional centre for the various empires which ruled the holy land before the emergence of the modern West Asian states.

Radian went on to claim that divided sovereignty had "never worked" in the

past. But this is not a reason for failing to try to make it work now and in the future.

The real reason the Israeli oppose sharing was provided by the distinguished Israeli academic, Dr. Israel Shahak, a survivor of the Belsen Nazi death camp, who said: "Because if shared it cannot any longer be Jewish." It has long been claimed by the Zionists that any land or property in the holy land which falls under Jewish control has to remain exclusively Jewish.

Apart from a nasty form of racial exclusiveness, this amounts to a claim that "what we have, we hold," particularly if what "we," the Jews, "have" is the Land of Israel held by right of conquest. East Jerusalem was captured from Jordan by Israel in the 1967 war.

To back up and make more acceptable the conquest, Israeli apologists have issued a great mass of publicity material to "prove" that they have a legal right to East Jerusalem, all of which is irrelevant and pathetically legalistic when set beside the simple and effective claim based on "possession" is nine tenths of the law.

In short, as a result of conquest, Israel is conducting a "land grab" — "to the victor the spoils." Nothing could be clearer, so what is all the debate about?

Yet another specious reason given by the Israeli official for the refusal to stop construction on the Jabal Abu Ghneim site is the Israelis' claim that they need more land to build new housing for Israeli citizens seeking to live in Jerusalem, especially young couples who cannot afford the housing prices in the city and so are being forced to move elsewhere. But if new Jewish housing is to be built, it has to be on

Israeli-owned land; hence the "land grab".

The "lack of housing" the Israelis claim is entirely false because an Israeli group called Peace Now has publicised the fact that there are scores of Jewish housing units lying unoccupied in Jerusalem and its environs. And the U.S. State Department reported that the vacancy rate stands at 25 per cent in some West Bank settlements, including those near Jerusalem.

To mollify the Palestinians and international public opinion, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to build 15,000 "Arab" housing units by the year 2010. So, asserted Radian, the bulldozers now working on Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa were actually promoting the Arab well-being. Twisted logic, if there can be such a thing.

And false propaganda, for Israel is not going to "build" housing units for the Palestinians but merely provide infrastructure enabling the Palestinian private sector to build. And this infrastructure will be developed in already existing Palestinian neighbourhoods, not open new areas up to Palestinian habitation.

One thing has to be conceded to the Israelis. However obnoxious their plans are, from the Arab point of view, they are absolutely open and honest about them. And why not? The powerless Arabs are in no position to frustrate the Israeli designs.

Thus, Radian was quite clear about Israeli determination to maintain the present population ratio in Jerusalem to three Israelis to one Palestinian by importing Israelis and squeezing out Arabs. Several methods are being used for the squeeze-

ing out process. If an Arab wants to build a house in Jerusalem, he is either refused a building permit outright or has to pay a swinging building tax of \$33,000, which very few Palestinians can afford. When the Palestinians have nowhere to live inside Jerusalem and have to move to surrounding villages, their Jerusalem residence permits are seized and cancelled. Over a thousand have been cancelled so far this year. A third method is to tax Palestinian businessmen to extinction after cutting them off from their customers in the West Bank through "closures." Last Sunday, Palestinian merchants went on strike against this practice.

The most flagrantly racist argument used by the Israelis is that while Arab housing in Jerusalem has to meet the needs of only the local Palestinians, Jewish housing has to meet the needs of Jewish settlers coming in from all over the world. This argument ignores the thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes in Jerusalem by Israel, refugees who would return if they were allowed to do so.

Pressure on the Palestinians is certain to increase for the reform school of Judaism has now proclaimed "aliya" or "emigration" to the Jewish state to be a Jewish religious duty and obligation, consequently to Lord God Jehovah's "promise" giving the Land of Palestine to the Jewish tribe. This is certain to increase "aliya" amongst American Jews who adhere to Reform Judaism.

The "battle for Jerusalem" is, surely, further proof, if proof is necessary, that religion should never be mixed with politics.

Fifi and the graduate

By Ali Kassay

AN INTERESTING new item appeared a couple of days ago in our favourite Jordanian English language daily (Jordan Times Tuesday 1 July). For the benefit of those who were otherwise occupied on that day, I bring to their attention that Fifi Abdo, Egypt's richest belly dancer, has raised her fee to \$3,100 for a private show, and to a staggering \$3,900 for the performance takes place outside Cairo. Ms. Abdo, we were further informed, is estimated by the press to have earned \$1.32 million between 1993 and 1996.

More power to her. Seriously, a private belly dancing show falls indisputably in the category of luxurious leisure pursuits. Nobody would miss out on a meal in order to be entertained by the gyrations of a belly dancer. The fact that Ms. Abdo finds a market for her performance means that enough people find her show distinctive in relation to others of her profession, and that they are willing to dig deep into their pockets in order to feast their eyes on the wriggling of this particular torso in the privacy of their own homes.

What I find most interesting, however, is not the merits of Ms. Abdo's dancing, a subject on which I am scarcely qualified to comment, nor her enterprising spirit, a subject that scarcely requires comment. Her success speaks for itself. What I find interesting is take this news item again, a recently published study which foresees that parents who send their children to an Ivy League university around the year 2000 should expect to spend around \$250,000 on the prodigious progeny during the four years of study.

A quarter of a million dollars. Now, a highly paid Jordanian professional family earns between JD 60 and JD 800 a month, if both parents work, which works out at around \$800-1,000. Assuming the higher figure, and assuming further that these parents dutifully devote all their earnings to their offspring's education, it should take them around 21 years of saving and investing in order to put aside such a sum of money.

On the other hand, we could look at the quarter of a million dollars as an investment. If the bright graduate returns to Jordan to put his science at the service of his country, and assuming that he does not have a waste, then he should expect to earn around JD 200 a month, which works out at around \$280, or \$3,360 per annum. The capital return period on the investment put in the person's education would be 250,000 divided by 3,360, which would yield 74 years, to which should be added the four years spent at college, making 78 years all in all.

Taking this logic a little further, one could ask the question of how much would a graduate from an Ivy League university need in order to earn as much as Fifi Abdo did in three years.

Three million dollars, divided by his annual income of \$3,360 would give us the figure of eight hundred and ninety three years.

This means that a graduate engineer, for instance, from one of the best universities in the world, would need 74 + 4 + 893 = 971 years to earn as much as Fifi Abdo did in three years.

More power to him, I wonder what Ms. Abdo's children will do when the reach university age.

Features

Why a Man

By Robert Fisk

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Why a Manhattan secretary won't let Israel forget the Cana massacre

By Robert Fisk

WHEN EVA Stern's grandfather Aaron Hersh climbed off the transport at Auschwitz extermination camp in June 1944, along with her mother Hannah and two aunts from their ultra-orthodox Jewish family, he was still holding his prayer shawl. "A Polish prisoner warned him he'd die if he didn't hand it over, but he refused," Eva Stern says. "Then a German officer ordered my grandfather to give the shawl to him while he was waiting in line for selection for the gas chambers. He again refused. So he shot my grandfather in the head. That's how he died."

In the lobby of the Manhattan hotel, Eva Stern speaks quickly, in an almost subdued voice, recalling the terrible story which her mother told her of the family's doomed journey from Czechoslovakia to Auschwitz. "She was only 17 and tried to save one of her sister's children by holding it in her arms. But another prisoner snatched it away and gave it back to her sister — because they would all die if Mengele saw both women with a child. So her sister and her children were all selected to die. And my mother lived."

"At least 70 members of her family were murdered. She was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp and was eventually liberated by the Red Army. The incident with the child had the greatest impact on her. I can honestly say that my mother hasn't slept for 50 years."

But it is the death of Eva's grandfather Aaron Hersh — a Talmudic scholar by the age of 20, who was shot after refusing to surrender his tallith (Jewish prayer shawl), that has marked her life.

With scarcely suppressed anger, she opens a thick file on the seat beside her. Entitled "Israel's Operation 'Grapes of Wrath' and the Cana Massacre," it is her own work, a compilation of photographs and news reports — some from The Independent — of Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon a year ago, in which more than 170 civilians were slaughtered. Ms. Stern flicks her finger in fury at one of the pictures which shows Israeli soldiers standing in front of their battle tanks on the Lebanese border. The newspaper caption reads: "Israeli soldiers briefly halt their shelling to commemorate Holocaust



Eva Stern

Day." And Ms. Stern looks at me to see if I understand why she is enraged at the picture.

"What would my grandfather say of this? What were those Israelis thinking as they were putting on their prayer shawls? Were they praying, 'Father who art in heaven, help me to kill as many 'Arabushim' as possible'? Do they now have a right to kill without any guilt?"

"... as an American taxpayer and an American Jew, I had an obligation to speak out. If ordinary Germans living under total oppression can be held responsible for the crimes committed by the Nazis — because they did not speak out — how much more responsible are we who live in a country where we have the freedom to speak out? If ordinary Germans were guilty for not speaking out, then surely we are also guilty in remaining silent about Cana."

'Arabushim' — a racist term for Arabs in the Hebrew language — was later used in an Israeli newspaper interview by one of the artillerymen who fired into the United Nations base at Cana last year. At least 109 civilians sheltering in the camp were killed. 55 of them children. Ms. Stern has included an English translation of the interview from Kol Ha'ir in her file, a set of documents which she has sent to the U.N., to

bloody adventures in which Israel has been involved in Lebanon over the past 20 years, most will not take kindly to Eva Stern's concern for the truth to be told.

"My feelings started slowly," she says. "I always had a problem with unquestioned obedience to authority. And when I thought about the atrocities committed by the Israelis, I felt that as an

the Lebanese delegation to the U.N. and to prominent American journalists in New York.

She hoped to persuade the latter to mark the first anniversary of the Cana massacre on April 18.

Ms. Stern's sense of outrage is as brave as it is lonely: although many American Jews are troubled by the behaviour of Israel's right-wing government and the

Cana. Because we don't live in fear of death squads. What I am doing is not courageous — it is the decent thing to do.

"If enough decent Germans had spoken out at the time, perhaps the Holocaust would not have happened."

Ms. Stern does not draw false parallels between the Nazis and the Israeli army. "I'm not saying that the level of atrocities committed by the Israelis is on the same scale or in any way comparable to those of the Nazis. Of course not. But I know that I have paid as a taxpayer for the shells that rained down on Cana. And therefore if I'm silent, I'm no better than those Germans. Israel claims to be the representative of the Jewish people. It's important for people to know that they clearly do not

live in fear of death squads. What I am doing is not courageous — it is the decent thing to do.

Although only a secretary in a Manhattan business — she was educated in an ultra-orthodox Brooklyn girls' school — Ms. Stern was encouraged in her campaign by Professor Noam Chomsky, one of America's foremost philosophers who is himself Jewish, and by the work of former Warsaw Ghetto survivor and chemistry professor, Dr. Israel Shahak, whose history of Israel she quotes by heart.

"He wrote that 'any support of human rights in general by a Jew which does not include the support of human rights of non-Jews whose rights are being violated by the Jewish state is as deceitful as the support of human

rights by a Stalinist.' That really influenced me."

Ms. Stern's father Chaim was a Hungarian Jew who also survived a concentration camp. "My mother was his cousin and they married in 1949. I was born seven years later," she says. "My parents are still alive and know my feelings about Israeli atrocities. They are sort of ambivalent about it. They believe I'm right in condemning it. But because of what they went through, they believe all the world is anti-Semitic. So when there's a terrorist attack against the Israelis, they are unable to see it in the context of the Arab-Israeli dispute. I strongly condemn any terrorist attack. But my parents see it in terms of 'the Arabs are anti-Semitic and that's why there's a terrorist

attack." "I refuse to condemn my parents for these feelings. They see all Germans, for example, as Nazis — because, in their experience, they only met Nazis. And for most Palestinians, the only Jews they know of are the oppressors. The Palestinians in the refugee camps in Lebanon have probably never met a decent moral Jew."

It was the killing of a Lebanese boy by a booby-trapped bomb that prompted the pro-Iranian Hizbollah — who blamed Israel for the incident — to launch rockets across the Lebanese border last April.

Israel responded with its three-week blitz on Lebanon. Israeli troops were planting booby-trap bombs inside the U.N. zone of Lebanon on April 18 when they came under

mortar attack from Hizbollah men who were firing 600ft from the U.N. base at Cana. Israel claimed its subsequent 17-minute shelling of the refugees there was a mistake, but the U.N. concluded that it was not an error.

Ms. Stern's attempt to persuade American journalists to mark the first anniversary of the blood-bath met with little more than indifference. Not a single mainstream American newspaper carried a paragraph — not even a brief news report on the U.N.-attended ceremony held in Lebanon to mark the first anniversary of the bloodbath.

Unlike Eva Stern, American journalists remained silent.

The Independent



The U.N. base at Cana where at least 109 people died of Israeli shelling in April 1996 (AP photo)

Dutch bike couriers are kings of the road

By Keiron Henderson
Reuter

AMSTERDAM — A typical manoeuvre for a bicycle courier might be to zip along the inside of a taxi before jumping across the path of a charging truck, then disappearing down a one-way street against oncoming traffic.

Cocky and aggressive, or a colourful adornment to street life? Why do these young people put their lives on the line to deliver our documents and packages?

For many cycle couriers the messenger's life means freedom from the grind of office life and the right to live their lives the way they want to. It also means frequent brushes with angry motorists and occasionally with the "grim reaper."

"When I'm riding along and the sun is out, I feel good. It's the best feeling in the world," said Dutch bike messenger Tijn, competing in the recent European Cycle Messengers Championship, which drew 500 cycle couriers to Amsterdam.

"All the people in their cars and the secretaries we're delivering packages to, they're really bored and you feel really sorry for them because they have to be inside all the time. We deliver our packages and

we're out of there, doing what we really love — riding," he adds, running a hand through his shock of bright purple hair.

Amsterdam was a fitting venue for the championship.

The bicycle is king in the Netherlands, where 15 million bikes — one per head of the population — ply the country's streets and extensive network of cycle lanes.

The Dutch virtually grow up on their bikes, perching on child seats in their infancy and throwing away their stabilisers almost as soon as they can walk, in a culture hooked on the convenience of cycling in a flat country.

Government statistics show the Dutch clock up almost 1,000 km each year on their bikes, with millions of people every day shunning the car and public transport to take part in a favourite Dutch pastime — saving money.

Bike couriers may not be part of polite Dutch cycling society, yet, but they have found their own niche.

Couriers tend to smile inwardly when sniffed at in elevators by the suit-wearing classes, revelling in their own lycra-tinged chic and relishing their brand of rebel glamour with no boss to frown on an orange goatee beard, windswept

dreadlocks or wrap-around sunglasses.

"They can look the way they want to look and it's OK, they can still pay the rent," said Kyle Shepherd of San Francisco, another competitor, looking up as a group of green-haired couriers from Copenhagen cheered on a colleague.

The championship, held in docklands close to Amsterdam's central station, brought together couriers from around the world in a show of sprints, package deliveries and stunt riding.

Riders themselves say the competition, won by road race licence holder Lars Urban of Germany, was not as important as the companionship and culture of couriership.

"Why do people jump out of planes, or go snowboarding? It's particularly high risk but there's a lot more involved than just the risk or thrill — it allows people to be very individualistic but be bound by a community," said David Fenton, spokesman for the Timbuk2 courier bag firm sponsoring the event.

"It's quite an ordeal to work as a courier and earn very little money, eight or 10 hours a day working in London, or San Francisco or Berlin, but you also eventually get this membership in a very select

group.

"It's a community of very, very individualistic people."

Cycling along with the sun on your back and the asphalt singing under your tyres with the freedom to wave hello to your cycle courier friends are all mentioned by messengers as the joys of the job. But what about the danger?

"Is it frightening? Yes, of course it is," says Tijn, musing over an incident five weeks earlier when he ran head on into a police tow truck.

"There are moments when you have to pull over, have a coffee or a cigarette and get it back together again. There are times when you get close to death and it shakes you up, but you always have the feeling that you're going to be OK."

"When you're bike couriers you're in control of everything. It's your fate you've got in your hands. It depends on your bike skills. Concentration, guts — that's what counts."

Road racer Urban of Germany takes a slightly different view of the risk-to-reward ratio.

"For me being a courier is paid training, because I'm still racing. The company I work for has around 40 guys and a lot of them are my friends so it's a very

close community," he says, spelling out why he plies the streets.

Urban says the most valuable asset for a courier is being cool under pressure and having strong nerves, rather than being gung-ho about danger.

"Car drivers and cyclists make mistakes. It's a question of how you use your eyes and anticipate danger," he says, adding that he has never had an accident in his five-year messengering career.

A recent father, Urban sees a time soon when he will hang up his courier bag, although he says he is never going to stop cycling for fun.

"For me it's a question of health. At the level I ride I have warning signals from my body and I have to listen to those. I want to get to 80 and be in quite good condition, if I go on cycling like this it won't be possible," he says.

Tijn doesn't see it that way. "I love to ride, I love to ride through town. I love the tension and adrenaline."

I'm 21. I plan to be doing this when I'm 31. In America there are bike messengers of around 55, 60. They don't go as fast as we do but they ride around town all day and they have a good time."

Environmentalists decry deals on protecting habitat

Washington (AP) — The Clinton administration's reluctance to use an environmental law to protect fish and wildlife is drawing fire from judges and environmentalists.

This spring, three federal judges criticized the government for failing to use the law, known as The Endangered Species Act, to protect jaguars in the southwest, lynx in the northwest and the Barton Springs salamander in Texas.

Environmentalists have grown increasingly critical of U.S. President Bill Clinton's willingness to bargain away the law's stringent protections.

"We are seeing a very disturbing pattern here," said Mark Hubbard of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, a non-profit conservation group based in Portland, Oregon, that has sued the government for lax enforcement.

"We have gone from surprised to disappointed to just plain angry with the Clinton administration over their refusal to protect endangered species," he said.

Architects of the administration's policy say negotiating with state and private land owners to save species makes sense in a political climate where property rights carry much weight.

The carrot works better than the stick, they argue.

"It is not a win to see a species driven to the verge of extinction and then be able to save the last of that species by hammering some-

one with the endangered species act," said Katie McGinty, director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The administration is using the law "to its fullest and most creative extent and reaching out to save those rare ecosystems by working in partnership with people who own the land," Ms. McGinty said.

By year's end the administration will have negotiated habitat conservation plans covering more than 7.3 million hectares of state and privately owned land.

Such pragmatism is no virtue in the eyes of Mr. Clinton's environmental critics.

"Essentially it is a new way to get around enforcing The Endangered Species Act," Sierra Club lobbyist Melinda Pierce said of the habitat conservation plans.

"It's just feel-good politics. They have junked the law," said Mike Bader of the Montana-based Alliance for the Wild Rockies, which wants federal protection for the bull trout in the northern Rocky Mountains.

Environmentalists' biggest beef is with a "no surprises" clause in the habitat conservation plans, which promises land owners that if they fulfill protection criteria, they'll be insulated from any future federal conservation requirements.

"It's the only way companies would ever enter into such agreements," said Chris West, vice

president of the Northwest Forestry Association in Portland, Oregon.

In March, federal judges in Arizona, Texas and Washington state chided the administration for refusing to order protection for the jaguar, Barton Springs salamander and lynx.

In the case of the jaguar, the fish and wildlife service was ordered to declare the rare cat endangered and set aside land to protect it.

In Washington, the agency was told to reconsider its decision to keep the lynx off the list; only a few hundred of the cats remain in a handful of states.

"The fish and wildlife service has consistently ignored the analysis of its expert biologists," wrote U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler in Seattle.

In Austin, U.S. District Judge Lucius Banton ruled that Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt had violated The Endangered Species Act after "strong political pressure was applied to the secretary to withdraw the proposed listing of the salamander."

Mr. Babbitt subsequently declared the salamander threatened. But environmentalists were up in arms again when the National Marine Fisheries Service decided April 25 against federal protection for Oregon's coastal coho salmon, opting instead to give the state a chance to try its own \$30 million recovery plan with support from the timber industry.

U.N.: Poor countries need minimum three per cent growth to reduce jobless

GENEVA (AFP) — Developing countries must grow by at least three per cent a year to reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty, a U.N. report released here Wednesday said.

Last year, Latin American nations that reached this goal accounted for only one-third of the continent's population. The percentage in Africa was one-quarter.

For both of those regions and the Caribbean, a three per cent average growth rate "would represent a new departure," the 1997 World Economic Survey said.

However, the economic environment improved considerably last year in Africa, and momentum should be sustained this year, U.N. economists said. "More than half of Africa's population is less than 20 years of age and growth in the region in 1996 was the highest in its lifetime."

Shrinking official development assistance (ODA) is "disquieting at a time when there is an unparalleled opportunity for the productive use of such resources by the world's poorest countries," the U.N. said.

Indications are that ODA shrank in 1996 after dwindle

to 0.27 per cent of the donor countries' gross domestic product in 1995 and the percentage will probably fall further in 1997.

U.N. economists forecast world output will expand by three per cent this year, the same as last year, and the volume of world trade by almost eight per cent in 1997, compared to 4.6 per cent.

The report forecast China's economic growth at 10 per cent this year with a relatively low rate of inflation, though unemployment was a cause for worry.

Officially, unemployment in urban areas rose to three per cent in 1996, but was probably much higher when the numbers of migrant workers were included, the U.N. noted.

China had an estimated 110 million excess workers out of a rural labour force of 450 million.

The U.N. said India's 1997 fiscal year budget had buoyed the country's economic outlook although it did not signal a big push in the pace of economic reform.

Overall, the region's growth in 1997 will remain

unchanged from last year's level as structural problems, export growth slow-down and fragility of the financial system in Thailand and South Korea in particular took their toll, according to the report.

One of the biggest disappointments of the year was the failure of economic growth in Russia to materialise, the economists said.

Looking at Europe, the report said that efforts to meet the fiscal criteria under the Maastricht treaty to qualify in the launch of the euro had hampered growth and worsened unemployment in many countries.

If a better measure of fiscal deficits had been adopted, it would have improved countries' prospects for entry and given them more room for manoeuvre on domestic issues, the U.N. said.

Deficit reduction measures should be part of a broader package geared to overall social and economic objectives, the U.N.'s economists said, adding that though there is often a need to shrink deficits, there is no economic value in forcing them to zero.

Yemen hikes prices of petrol, electricity and water

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen Tuesday decided to hike the costs of petrol, electricity and water as part of an economic reform programme while increasing public sector wages by 20 per cent to compensate.

The price of a litre of petrol went up from 19 riyals (14 cents) to 25 riyals (19 cents), a rise of 26 per cent, while electricity charges are to be doubled and water fees also raised.

Kerosene went up from three riyals (2.5 cents) to five riyals (four cents) a litre.

The cabinet also decided to cut subsidies on wheat and flour by 17 per cent, and telephone charges are to go up 25 per cent in the coming days.

The economic reforms in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, are the third phase of a programme launched in 1995 in coordination with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The first two waves of reforms included reducing subsidies on oil and electricity, and increased tariffs on public services such as telecommunications.

A doubling of petrol prices in March 1995 sparked violent protests, especially in the main southern town of Aden.

The government now aims to eradicate all subsidies on wheat and flour in 1998 and to slash the size of the public sector, laying off around 35,000 employees. Reforms in banking and the financial sector are also planned.

A government source said the rise in salaries would not be paid until the new year, but with retroactive effect.

The reforms to date have allowed Yemen to cut inflation from 74 per cent in 1995 to a projected level of 11.5 per cent for 1997, another official told AFP, asking not to be named.

A planning ministry source said subsidies on fuel, food and services have fallen from \$600 million a year to \$450 million since the first reforms were carried out.

In June, Yemen received a \$1.8 billion loan from the international community for infrastructure projects and won praise for its reforms.

Japan's unemployment to hit 5 per cent in 2002 — poll

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's unemployment rate will reach 5.0 per cent in 2002 as the nation's economic landscape is altered by reform, a business organisation has forecast.

The Japanese Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai) said a survey of its members revealed that 64.4 per cent of respondents believe unemployment would reach 5.0 per cent by 2002.

"The layoff of underemployed workers by Japanese companies will support the figure as more are forced out of the workforce," a spokesman for the association said.

"The government's deregulation will cost job opportunities," he said.

Japan's seasonally adjusted unemployment

rate in April edged up 0.1 percentage point from the previous month to 3.3 per cent, the Management and Coordination Agency reported.

But economic analysts question the official figure due to high levels of underemployment due to the practice of Japanese companies retaining excess labour rather than shedding workers they do not need.

"The real unemployment rate roughly is twice as large as government announcements if we include underemployment, which is considerably high in Japan," said Junji Ota, an analyst at Okasan Research Institute Ltd.

"Japan's unemployment rate is expected to further increase in the mid-term as Japanese companies

are forced to carry out streamlining efforts," Mr. Ota said.

Suggesting a major shift in the attitude of Japanese executives, 71 per cent of respondents said they were tending toward a policy of putting profits before stable employment and 87 per cent expected the income gap to widen.

On other economic matters, 90 per cent of respondents welcomed the implementation of deregulation.

They predicted that the government would wield regulatory power over only 20-to-30 per cent of the economy in 2002 from the current 40 per cent, the spokesman said.

Of the associations 1,610 members polled on the future of the nation's economy, 30 per cent responded, he said.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7415	0.6013	1.4550	114.85	1.3620	1700.00	1.9588	5.8870	
DE Mark	0.5742	-	0.3448	0.8354	65.34	0.7931	975.61	1.1247	3.3853
GB Sterling	1.6630	2.8830	-	2.4081	190.45	2.2983	2827.10	3.2575	8.7568
CH Franc	0.5873	119.61	0.4127	-	78.32	0.9492	1167.58	134.88	4.0295
JP Yen	0.0087	1.5150	0.5228	1.2658	-	1.2023	14.79	170.40	5.1040
CA Dollar	0.7236	1.2353	0.4304	1.0310	1.20	-	1205.88	1.3900	4.1875
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0241	0.3534	0.0855	1481.92	0.8127	-	11.52	3.4502
NL Guilder	0.5105	88.86	0.3068	74.27	58.59	0.7052	867.44	-	2.9937
FR Franc	0.1704	0.2967	0.1024	24.7913	19.56	0.2355	33.38	33.3800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7504	3.3770	3.6398	0.3022	3.6729	1535.50	3.3930
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2972	5.3324	5.1410	0.4268	5.1677	2168.79	4.7924
GB Sterling	0.2665	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0806	0.98	409.42	0.9047
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8781	9.3488	-	9.68	0.8018	9.74	4073.27	9.0007
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.8430	1.01	421.86	0.9322
Kuwait Dinar	3.5986	2.5432	12.4124	1.2478	12.05	-	12.16	5041.51	0.9322
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0211	0.9910	0.0823	-	418.06	0.9238
Lebanese/1000	0.85	0.4811	2.4425	0.2455	2.3704	0.1968	2.3929	-	2.2097
Egyptian	0.2947	0.2087	1.1053	0.1111	1.0727	0.0891	1.0825	452.55	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	Revised							
Brent	18.46	18.06							
W. Texa	19.39	18.82							
Bonny	18.46	18.06							
Dubai	17.90	16.67							
UL Gas	178.00	178.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4646	0.16034	0.38823	30.6504				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47443	0.16372	0.39642	31.2969				
KW Dinar	3.3996	5.76701	1.99005	4.81828	380.373				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.82221	1.59516	3.8625	304.971				
CY Pound	1.9347	3.3693	1.1627	2.515	222.2				

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	335	335.5							
Silver (oz's)	4.71	4.73							
Platinum (oz's)	419	422							
AL (3 Months)	1573	1576							
CU (3 Months)	2416	2421							
Zinc (3 Months)	1433	1438							
Lead (3 Months)	626	629							
Ni (3 Months)	6880	6890							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	7687.72	33.47	0.44	7770.73	7683.79	7684.25		
New York	S&P 500	887.3	3.62	0.41	894.7	883.88	883.68		
London	FT-SE 100	4640.3	-17.6	-0.38	4652	4623.1	4657.9		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20523.75	-101.01	-0.49	20742.7	20523.8	20624.8		
Paris	CAC 40	2891.04	-2.6	-0.09	2903.18	2875.28	2893.64		
Frankfurt	DAX	3736.41	-8.88	-0.26	3811.44	3755.35	3805.29		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/lbs)	185.87	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1898	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	326.5	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot							
Soya (c/lbs)	22.2	Spot							
Tea (c/lbs)	138	Spot							
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot							

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS	1 — manana	6 Pony pace	10 Military acronym	14 Praise	15 Famous Bob	16 Flanges	17 "...and he had"	19 What's — for me?	20 Skin	21 Corpulent	22 Fast flyers	23 — of two evils	25 Mr. — (Marquand sleuth)	27 Biblical land	28 Father of Ajax	31 Madison Avenue tycoons	32 — "Doone"	34 Vane dir.	35 Pencil part	36 Submarine	37 Sheep	38 — de mer	39 — for the Misbegotten	40 Baking units	41 WWI British commander	43 Flew alone	45 Deviate	46 Regulate	47 Acidity	49 Beethoven's "Fur —"	51 "Moby Dick" character	54 152	55 "...and a — wit" (Shakespeare)	57 Foot or horse	58 Mother of Apollo	59 — Carlo	60 Pitcher	61 Hebrew lyre	62 Exhorts
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by Melvin Kenworthy

40 Misbegotten"
 41 Baking units
 42 WWI British
 commander
 Flew alone
 43 Deviate
 44 Regulate
 45 Acidity
 46 Beethoven's
 "Fur —"
 51 "Moby Dick"
 character
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 55 "...and a — wit"
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 57 Foot or horse
 58 Mother of Apollo
 59 — Carlo
 60 Pitcher
 61 Hebrew lyre

4 Staggered
 5 Elev.
 6 Jerry Lewis
 movie
 7 Baseball's Maris
 8 Work
 9 Flat place
 10 Bead of grain
 11 "...wife's a —"
 (Burns)
 12 Neglect
 13 WWI craft
 14 Forfeit
 16 Jose or Diego
 26 Wave: Sp.
 27 Paragon
 28 Radio type
 29 Upright
 30 Loch —

Wednesday's Puzzle solved:

EAST	ALDER	APSE	
ASEA	RAISE	NAPA	
CHRIST	MASC	ACTUS	
HEE	TEAL	THERE	
	AIRS	SOHO	
SCURRY	DERERED		
PARE	KEVIN	AND	
ORGAN	PIPE	CACTUS	
OLE	ORLO	HERE	
ROSE	ROOT	RAINED	
	AMPS	PAIN	
ASTRA	MEND	SPA	
MISTLE	TOE	CACTUS	
AMAH	CELLO	ALLS	
SPRY	UNDER	BOLT	

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DOWN	1 Pile	2 Wheels connection	3 "The — of gratitude" (Thomas Gray)	4 Staggered	5 Eleve	6 Jerry Lewis	7 movie	8 Baseball's Maris	9 Work	10 Flat place	11 Bead of grain	12 "...wife's a —"	13 Neglect	14 WWI craft	15 Forfeit	16 Joss or Diego	17 Wave: Sp.	18 Paragon	19 Radio type	20 Upright	21 Loch —	22 — matter	23 Tic-tac-toe winner	24 Bumbershoot	25 One who calls up spirits	26 Chemical ending	27 Corrida cheer	28 More spectral	29 Russian city	30 Likewise	31 Farm measurement	32 Talon	33 Fibs	34 Before: pref.	35 Side issues	36 Big bird
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HOROSCOPE
FORECAST
FOR WEDNESDAY,
JULY 2, 1997
By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be as precise as you can in handling your daily activities today and give a fine finish to any career activities you perform. Be more tactful with your fellow associates and thereby you can establish a better relationship.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You should not allow an arrogant fellow associate to throw his or her duties onto your lap and thereby make your efforts less productive. Be very cooperative with a good friend later this evening and make your time peaceful.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The situation at home is not very good today, so be sure you don't do anything to make it worse. Be sure to drive carefully later this evening while out on the town and thereby avoiding any difficulties.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A sarcastic remark from a good friend today should be ignored, otherwise tensions become quite heated. Use great care in the handling of correspondence during the daytime and thereby making your efforts more successful.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be very cautious today where financial matters are concerned, or you could make a costly mistake which could damage your reputation. Handle property matters only in the evening as this is the time when cooler heads prevail.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Your judgement may not be very good during the daytime today, so you should not rely too much on your intuition. Don't be overly critical towards anyone later this evening otherwise there could be much difficulty.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You should not allow yourself to be flustered by a few small, irritating difficulties, otherwise you will become emotionally ill. If you go out on the town later this evening, don't spend too much money for any emergency.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be cautious about asking indelicate questions of a casual acquaintance. Rely on your mate's judgement more often later this evening, as this person has good ideas which could be quite beneficial for the days ahead.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Handle your career activities very carefully today, and avoid criticism which could be destructive to your mental powers. This is a good time to get together with friends you have not seen for awhile and thereby renew acquaintances.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is not a good day today to go after a new project, no matter how interesting it may seem to you. Steer clear of strangers later this evening, otherwise you could discover that you are being deceived.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette Company suffers JD2.5m loss; first in 65 years

**** HAVING RECORDED** its first loss during the 65 years of operation, the chairman of the Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette Company told the general assembly that the firm will be taking specific measures to restructure its operations and marketing programmes. The measures include reducing general expenditures by cutting staff, moving the offices of the management to the factory site and improving the quality of products in addition to sharpening the marketing efforts.

Other measures mentioned by Board Chairman Ali Farid Al Saad were reducing the company's debts, developing human resources and putting new training policies. Noting that the current portion of long-term credits has exceeded JD10 million, Mr. Saad said the company now seeks to increase the capital in such a way to settle its financial matters or issue bonds to secure enough liquidity to repay the bank loans.

Referring to cutting the workforce, Mr. Saad said the company started laying off workers from mid-1996. He added: "We cannot say now when this process will end as such a matter depends on implementing the other aspects of the restructuring programme." He continued: "The programme to save on wages is extremely regrettable but we try to lessen the impact in cooperation with the association and the government."

Mr. Saad attributed the company's difficulties to the large volume of smuggled cigarettes. He pointed out that the government benefits from an 80 per cent average sales tax on the company's sales whereas smuggled products, which account for at least one third of the sales in the market, do not provide any revenue for the Treasury. Noting that smuggled cigarettes are sold for less than the prices of products subject to the tax, he demanded stricter government measures to combat smuggling which, he said, is threatening the local tobacco industry.

Another reason for the difficulties according to the chairman was an unfair taxation on some of the products of the company compared with the products manufactured by other local companies. He claimed that his firm has paid an extra JD2.85 million in this regard and efforts are still continuing with the concerned authorities to ensure fairness.

Sales last year were 23 per cent below the 1995 level as they dropped from JD95.5 million to JD75.5 million. This sharp decline led to a loss of JD2.5 million in 1996.

Mr. Saad said export markets remained closed in 1996 for reasons beyond the company's control. "Had it not been so, exports would have absorbed the drop of sales in the local market and reduced production costs and other expenses," he concluded (Al Aswaq + Al Dustour).

Gulf Air appoints new manager for the region

ABDUL MALIK AL SAEI has been appointed as Gulf Air's manager of the Levant region, in charge of the overall operation ex Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Cyprus.

Based in Amman, Mr. Al Saei will be responsible for promoting the airline's marketing, sales, customer services within the region.



THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen



"Putting a long-stemmed rose on my pillow is romantic—but not after I'm already asleep!"

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MYJUP

YAFLE

DEPLUH

MAMBEL

Print answer here: AN

Yesterday's Jumbles: TANGY KNEEL ADAGIO GOODY

Answer: A fussy customer can turn into this — A 'NO' IT ALL



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

WHAT TOURISTS GET WHEN THEY VIEW THAT TOWER IN PARIS.

Kuwaiti bankers back restrictions on loans for share purchases

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti bankers and analysts have welcomed a decision by the central bank to tighten regulations on lending to customers to buy shares in local stocks.

Central Bank Governor Salim Abdul Aziz Al Sahab laid down new guidelines that will put an end to so-called "margin accounts" and told banks to rein in other forms of lending for share purchases.

Margin accounts, where an investor borrows funds to buy stocks trying to earn a better return than the interest on the loan, have been criticised by some analysts for driving up stock prices and encouraging speculation.

The Kuwait Stock Exchange index has risen more than 20 per cent since the start of the year, on top of a 40 per cent rise in 1996, which has raised concerns particularly in parliament that the market is overheating.

Under the new guidelines, banks must phase out all margin accounts by the end of the year and reduce other lending for share purchases, such as overdrafts or personal loans, to meet new limits.

Lending for share purchases must not exceed 10 per cent of a bank's total loans portfolio or 25 per cent of shareholders' equity, whichever is less, the governor told the official

Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA).

"I think it is prudent. I support the central bank guidelines," commented the head of one Kuwaiti commercial bank, Sheikh Salim said total lending for share purchases reached 425 million dinars (\$1.4 billion), of which margin accounts accounted for 96 million dinars (\$316 million).

The total also includes lending to buy shares in newly-privatised companies, which reached 70.6 million dinars (\$232 million), but the new regulations do not cover this type of lending, the governor said.

Leading Kuwaiti economist Jasssem Al Saudoun welcomed the decision

because he said the market is heading for a correction and by stepping in now the central bank is ensuring a "soft landing."

But he said the central bank might have handled introducing the new guidelines better, because the regulator only approved the introduction of margin accounts last year.

One fund manager agreed, saying: "The bad thing about this decision is the period of time" given to repay the loans.

Borrowers should be given longer than seven months to repay outstanding facilities to prevent a rush of sales in local stocks, he said.

Airbus must capture 50% of world market, chief executive says

TOULOUSE, France (AFP) — Airbus Industrie must capture half the world civil

airliner market by 2002 or risk going out of business within 20 to 30 years, the consortium's chief executive has warned.

Airbus, with between 30 and 40 per cent of the market at present, "is too big to be ignored" by its main competitor the U.S. giant Boeing-McDonnell Douglas but "is not big enough to be sure of long-term survival," Jean Pierson said.

Talking to members of the specialised press here, Mr. Pierson said the goal of Airbus should be to produce a full range of airliners rather than limiting itself to certain types of aircraft.

He said Airbus should aim to launch an aircraft at each end of the scale — in the 100 passenger and more than 500 passenger slots — where Airbus is not actually represented, as well as completing its current range.

If Airbus sticks only to its current products, "we will have zero share of the mar-

ket in 30 years' time," he said.

Airbus has not modified its timetable for the Super Jumbo A3XX despite the recent abandoning by Boeing of its own B747X project.

Mr. Pierson said plans were still on foot to develop a new range of aircraft capable of transporting up to 900 passengers.

Mr. Pierson said he believed Boeing's only goal was to "keep its monopoly in very large aircraft (B747), as far as possible by spending nothing."

If Airbus failed to launch the A3XX, Mr. Pierson said its U.S. competitor would probably not react. But he said "when Boeing feels the Airbus pot starting to boil, when the partners of the European consortium are ready to go into production, then certainly Boeing will announce plans for a new aircraft for 2006 or 2008 as it did when it tried to cut us out after we launched the A320 in the 1980s."

Naouri group achieves ISO 9002 certification

AMMAN (J.T.) — In spite of the difficulties in applying the ISO 9002 to the shipping industry, Mr. Ibrahim Naouri with his Group of Companies were able to collect three recorded certificates in this field, granted to: L. Naouri Group of Companies (NG), Ammon Shipping & Transport (AST) and Salam Shipping and Forwarding (SSF). The three companies provide ship agencies services and multi-modal transport distinguished with high competence and quality that competes with foreign companies worldwide.

As a matter of fact, NG, AST and SSF are considered pioneers in this field of industry to be awarded ISO 9002 certificates.

On behalf of SGS Yarsely ICS UK, the authorised body to grant such certificates, Eng. Essam Behery and Eng. Yasser Awadallah were impressed with the efficiency and the high standard of the quality system implemented within the three companies.

Referring to the impact of the ISO 9002 certification on the Transport & Shipping Industry Mr. Naouri said that: "The acquiring of the ISO 9002 certificate enhances the confidence of the international markets in the performance of our local companies, it also enhances the trust in the staff performing services, not to mention that it reflects the bright face of Jordan on an international level."

"We can't deny the roll of Philadelphia Consulting Group in supervising the project of the three companies to prepare and train the staff on ISO 9002 requirements and specifications. A project which was headed by Eng. Samer Khubeis," added Mr. Naouri.

Mr. Naouri described the accreditation of the ISO 9002 certificate to be an award for the Ministry of Transport, the Ports Authority and the Sector of Trade and Industry in Jordan.

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AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI											
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 01/07/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENT
269,000	213,000	ARAB BANK	11.7	1.57	7	300	76400	252.00	255.00	3.00	1.00
2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	32	60150	182604	2.07	2.10	0.03	0.03
1,210	880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	61.1	0.00	5	3000	2790	93	93	-	-
4,180	2,440	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	12.1	0.00	1	150	513	3.60	3.42	-0.18	-0.05
4,050	3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.9	3.29	4	1568	5739	3.59	3.65	0.06	0.06
3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FIR. BANK	20.2	0.00	5	11447	36010	3.15	3.15	-	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 196.54	CHNG: +0.88	55	76659	247772				
2,350	1,600	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	4.7	12.05	2	1000	1660	1.67	1.66	-0.01	-0.01
2,200	1,820	JOR. LIFE INSUR.	8.3	4.67	1	100	214	2.04	2.14	0.10	0.10
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 113.83	CHNG: +0.45	3	1100	1874				
1,820	1,460	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	7.9	6.10	10	3740	8120	1.63	1.64	0.01	0.01
1,380	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	8	0.00	15	41434	52781	1.26	1.28	0.02	0.02
810	480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	25.7	0.00	2	1750	868	50	50	-	-
1,910	1,170	MID-EAST HOTELS	19.0	0.00	3	3500	1875	1.27	1.25	-0.02	-0.02
3,720	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	7.6	0.00	2	550	1596	2.90	2.91	0.01	0.01
1,220	950	ZARIA EDUCATION	9	0.00	4	2100	1980	95	94	-0.01	-0.01
2,210	1,630	UNIFIED CO.	7.9	6.59	1	500	835	1.67	1.67	-	-
1,010	640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	420	295	71	68	-0.03	-0.03
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 108.05	CHNG: +0.03	39	51994	66340				
4,450	3,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.5	2.70	24	29004	118465	4.08	4.08	-	-
4,140	2,710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	11.0	2.51	10	31387	124904	3.95	3.98	0.03	0.03
7,050	4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.5	3.01	3	2500	16825	6.62	6.65	0.03	0.03
10,250	8,720	ARAB PETROL. REFINERY	9.4	9.16	70	679	880	9.70	10.10	0.40	0.40
7,250	6,000	JORDAN TANNING	7.3	5.04	4	114	678	6.10	5.95	-0.15	-0.15
4,000	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MANUF.	10.7	5.13	72	170706	664068	3.86	3.90	0.04	0.04
7,250	5,650	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	6.7	3.05	5	3575	27113	6.55	6.55	-	-
6,850	4,250	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	13.5	4.55	8	2888	15878	5.52	5.50	-0.02	-0.02
3,850	2,730	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.3	9.23	3	5134	13905	2.74	2.71	-0.03	-0.03
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	21	22000	10120	46	46	-	-
780	520	NATIONAL TDS	9	0.00	4	3050	1591	53	53	-	-
1,330	570	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	12	12230	6971	57	57	-	-
1,090	560	JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS.	9	0.00	2	900	513	56	57	0.01	0.01
3,330	2,120	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NPAC	40.1	0.00	1	250	625	2.52	2.50	-0.02	-0.02
950	550	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	1	500	285	56	57	0.01	0.01
1,670	1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.6	5.07	6	4000	8520	1.38	1.38	-	-
1,430	1,000	KAWTHER INVEST.	99.5	0.00	1	100	101	1.08	1.01	-0.07	-0.07
2,210	1,210	UNIV. MOON. INDUS.	9	21	54	44550	53500	1.21	1.21	-	-
1,520	1,120	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	14.7	9.17	9	10250	11198	1.11	1.09	-0.02	-0.02
1,090	830	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.4	0.00	4	3800	3192	84	84	-	-
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.0	0.00	8	3792	4137	1.10	1.09	-0.01	-0.01
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 127.53	CHNG: +0.23	257	350836	1076723				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 159.54	CHNG: +0.56	354	480589	1392710				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 01/07/1997											
640	350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	4	1177	435	37	37	-	-
670	410	JOR. TRADE PAC.	12.3	0.00	2	1000	460	45	46	0.01	0.01
840	660	UNION INV. SOFTW.	9	0.00	6	4150	808	66	67	0.01	0.01
650	370	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	12	22950	10787	47	47	-	-
950	610	AL-DAMLIYAR 751	59.5	0.00	9	49900	18063	63	62	-0.01	-0.01
510	200	JOR. TDS. MATCH-JENCO	9	0.00	9	600	446	24	25	0.01	0.01
710	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	3	695	375	54	54	-	-
590	400	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	46.1	0.00	1	2000	800	40	40	-	-
750	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. RANICO	9	0.00	35	30900	51824	57	57	-	-
850	710	JORDAN STEEL	6.7	6.76	5	11500	8584	73	74	0.01	0.01
580	430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	1	1000	500	50	50	-	-
1,220	860	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	10	200	128	89	89	-	-
690	550	RAJ. PHARM. 857	8	0.00	10	7650	3142	57	56	-0.01	-0.01
600	350	INDS. ENG.	22.8	0.00	7	4000	1448	36	37	0.01	0.01
520	260	J. TEXTILE MANUF.	9	0.00	3	150	39	26	26	-	-
870	530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.0	15.38	9	4300	2754	65	65	-	-
GRAND TOTAL			112	202672	10291						

↑ New 12 months low
↓ Listed during the past 12 months
P / E ratio is 100 or more
g Negative P/E
x Rating is zero or N/A for the most recent year

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Boxer Mike Tyson apologizes for biting Evander Holyfield during their bout June 28, as he makes his first public statements about the incident during a press conference. Tyson also asked the Nevada Athletic Commission not to ban him for life (Reuters photo)

Tyson apologises for biting Holyfield

LAS VEGAS (R) — A contrite Mike Tyson, facing likely severe penalties for biting Evander Holyfield during their heavy-weight title fight, apologised on Monday for "snapping" in the ring and begged for forgiveness.

Tyson, pleading for the right to continue his career, said he would accept the punishment soon to be handed down but asked only that it not be a lifetime ban from boxing.

The fighter also acknowledged he was seeking unspecified psychiatric treatment to control the kind of behaviour that U.S. President Bill Clinton has said "horrified" all Americans.

Tyson was disqualified for twice biting Holyfield's ears in the third round of their World Boxing Association fight Saturday and had to be physically restrained from attacking his opponent after being disqualified.

Appearing before reporters, Tyson read a statement but declined to answer any questions one day before the Nevada State Athletic Commission was to hold an emergency meeting to decide whether to fine, suspend or ban him from boxing. Other states could follow suit in any suspension or ban.

In his news conference, Tyson never once referred specifically to biting Holyfield. The champion, who also beat Tyson in their first match last November, will need reconstructive plastic surgery to repair a hole on top of his right ear.

"Evander, I am sorry. You are a champion and I respect that," said Tyson on the day he turned 31.

"Saturday night was the worst night of my professional career as a boxer," said the 31-year-old, who was the youngest world heavy-weight champion 11 years ago at the age of 20. "I am here today to apologise."

"I apologise to the world, to my family and to the Nevada State Athletic Commission that has always treated me fairly."

He said he was asking fans "who expected more from Mike Tyson to forgive me for snapping in that ring and doing something that I have never done before and will never do again."

Yet Tyson continued to argue he was provoked by a head-butt by Holyfield in the second round, a bout that referee Mills Lane considered unintentional.

"When you butted me... Accidentally or not, I snapped in reaction and the rest is history," he said.

"For an athlete in the heat of battle to suddenly lose it is not new, but it is not right and for me it doesn't change anything. I was wrong," he said.

"I cannot tell you why exactly I acted like I did, other than to say that when the butting occurred, and I thought I might lose because of the severity of the cut above my

eye, I just snapped....

"I expect to pay the price like a man. I expect the Nevada state athletic commission to hand down a severe penalty and I am here today to say I will not fight it."

"I only ask that I not be penalised for life for this mistake," he said.

"To those who say that I should never fight again, I can only say that I am just 31 years old in the prime of my career and I have made it this far because I had no other way."

After the five-man commission's meeting Tuesday, Tyson would have up to 30 days to respond, but he said he was willing to have any punishment start right away.

Commission chairman Elias Ghanem told the Las Vegas Review-Journal that he favoured fining Tyson the whole of his \$30 million purse for the fight. But under state laws, the panel can withhold only 10 per cent.

The commission could also revoke Tyson's boxing license — something many fight fans have urged.

Mindful also that he is still on four years' probation after serving three years for a rape conviction, Tyson apologised to the Indianapolis judge who presided over that case.

He included "Judge Patricia Gifford, who knows that I am proud to be living up to the terms of my probation."

The fighter also said he regretted that his action had deprived fans of what shaped up to be a fine contest — although the Holyfield camp has accused Tyson of fouling deliberately to end a fight he knew he was losing.

"I am only saddened that the fight did not go further so that the boxing fans of the world might see for themselves who would come out on top," said Tyson.

One Internet company has announced plans for a class action lawsuit on behalf of people who paid to see the fight on cable television. World Net Technologies asked would-be litigants to sign up at www.usaworldnet.com.

Tyson also addressed those who have questioned his mental stability.

"I have reached out since Saturday to the medical professionals for help to tell me why I did what I did and I will have that help," he said without elaborating.

"I grew up in the streets (of Brooklyn, New York). I fought my way out and I will not go back again. I learned the hard way from the past because I didn't have the luxury of schools or people to help me at a time when I needed it most."

"I will learn from this horrible mistake."

Montreal wins 1st round in battle of Canada

TORONTO (R) — The second round of interleague play got underway on Monday with Montreal winning the first ever Major League game beaten two Canadian clubs.

Pedro Martinez tossed a three-hitter to outduel Pat Hentgen as the Expos claimed the first round in the battle of Canada with a 2-1 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

Martinez (10-3), who did not give up a hit until Alex Gonzalez led off the sixth with a single, walked one and struck out 10 in lowering his era to a Major League-best 1.54.

"He's one of the nastiest right-handers I've ever seen," said Hentgen of Martinez. "Pedro was on top of his game."

Vladimir Guerrero belted a solo homer in the second inning and David Segui added an RBI triple in the sixth for Montreal, which improved to 6-1 in interleague play.

Mark Grudzielanek scored on Segui's triple when Otis Nixon lost the ball in the sunset.

Hentgen (8-5) also pitched well, allowing two runs and six hits with one walk and three strikeouts as he tied

Martinez for the Major League lead with his seventh complete game.

"He pitched a great game," said Blue Jays manager Cito Gaston. "If not for the lost ball, it would be 1-1 and we would still be playing."

Toronto got its lone run on a solo shot by Carlos Delgado in the seventh inning.

In Detroit, Bob Higginson belted three homers and drove in seven runs as the Tigers smacked six home runs in a 14-0 clobbering of the New York Mets.

Higginson hit two-run homers in the first and seventh and a three-run shot in the sixth. Raul Casanova, Damion Easley and Orlando Miller also homered for Detroit. Brian Hunter went 4-for-4, stole two bases — bringing his Major League-best total to 39 — and scored four times for the Tigers.

Mets starter Mark Clark (6-5) was rocked for eight runs and eight hits over 5 1/3 innings. Justin Thompson (8-6) gave up just three singles in eighth innings for the win.

In New York, Luis Sojo's single with two outs in the bottom of the 10th inning scored Joe Girardi to give the Yankees a 1-0 victory over the Atlanta Braves in a meeting of last season's World Series participants.

Singles by Girardi and Derek Jeter put runners at first and second and Sojo grounded a 2-2 pitch up the middle to plate Girardi with the winning run.

Atlanta starter Tom Glavine held the Yankees scoreless for nine innings. Mike Bielecki (3-4) pitched the 10th for Atlanta and suffered the loss. Mike Stanton (5-0) got the win by pitching the top of the 10th for New York.

In Oakland, Chris Jones and Tony Gwynn belted three-run homers in a seven-run second inning to power the San Diego Padres to a 15-6 thumping of the Athletics.

Greg Vaughn added an RBI single in the first and a three-run homer in the fourth and Wally Joyner went 5-for-6 with two RBI for San Diego, which victimised Oakland pitching for 19 hits.

Andy Ashby (4-4) picked up the win despite allowing five runs — two earned — on six hits in seven innings. Don Wengert (3-7) was bombed for seven runs on

eight hits in just three innings for the loss.

In Baltimore, Mike Mussina allowed a run and six hits in eight-plus innings to record his 100th career win and Cal Ripken's grand slam highlighted a six-run third as the Orioles snapped a four-game skid with an 8-1 pounding of the Philadelphia Phillies.

The game marked the first meeting between the teams since Baltimore beat Philadelphia in the 1983 world series.

Mussina (10-2) walked one and struck out nine to improve to 5-0 in eight home starts this season. Calvin Maduro (3-7) gave up six runs and four hits with five walks for the loss.

In the third inning, Ripken launched his 11th homer of the season and seventh career Grand Slam for a 5-0 lead.

In Boston, Alex Fernandez allowed six hits over 7 1/3 innings to help the Florida Marlins establish a franchise record of 16 games over .500 with an 8-5 win over the Red Sox.

Fernandez (9-6) allowed four runs and six hits with three walks and seven strikeouts for his fourth straight win and Jim

Eisenreich had a pair of RBI for the Marlins.

Troy O'Leary hit a three-run homer and Mike Stanley added a solo shot for Boston. But Tim Wakefield (3-8) received no help from his defence as Boston made four errors. Wakefield gave up seven runs, but just two earned, and seven hits.

In Seattle, Glenallen Hill and Mark Lewis drove in runs in the top of the 10th inning to lift the San Francisco Giants to an 8-6 victory over the Mariners in an interleague battle of Western Division leaders.

With one out in the 10th and runners at first and second, Hill, whose RBI single in the eighth had given the Giants a brief 6-5 lead, singled home Jeff Kent for a 7-6 lead. Lewis's sacrifice fly to right plated J.T. Snow with an insurance run.

Rod Beck (4-2) got the win despite blowing a save. He allowed a run and two hits over 1 1/3 innings.

Lewis homered in the fourth and Kent and Snow hit back-to-back homers in the sixth for the Giants, who improved to 6-1 in interleague play.

Zola may leave Chelsea after 1998 World Cup

ROME (R) — Chelsea's Italian forward Gianfranco Zola says he might leave England to play in his native Sardinia after next year's World Cup finals in France.

In an interview published by La Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper on Monday, Zola said he wanted to wind down his career at Cagliari, who were relegated to Serie B last season.

"Without new stimuli a footballer doesn't exist," said Zola, who has been a huge success at Chelsea since he joined them from Parma in November 1996.

"That's why I've decided, if it's possible in a year's time, or maybe two, to end my career with Cagliari."

"Of course, I'm only speaking hypothetically. I don't even know if Cagliari will get back into Serie A and, if they do, if they'll want me."

Zola, who turns 31 this Saturday, said he saw the 1998 World Cup finals in France as his last chance to exercise the ghosts of the 1994 world cup in the United States and last year's European Championships in England.

"The idea of going from the very big to the very little, to chase the biggest victory of all with the national team and then to champion the cause of my homeland... it would be a change of perspective," he said.

In the States, Zola was sent off for the only time in his career in a match against Nigeria. The dismissal, after the little Sardinian had been on the pitch just 11 minutes, was widely regarded as one of the worst refereeing decisions in World Cup history.

At Euro 96, Zola missed a penalty in a first round match against Germany. The game ended 0-0 and, as a result, Italy were eliminated.

"I still have one (tournament) left, in 1998, to break the spell," Zola told La Gazzetta. "I'm ready."

Pirates win; Cubs overcome Royals 8-7

PITTSBURGH (R) — Jon Lieber struck out Chicago slugger Albert Belle four times in pitching a five-hitter to lead the Pittsburgh Pirates to a 3-1 victory over the White Sox as interleague play resumed on Monday.

Dale Sveum and Kevin Young hit solo homers for the Pirates.

Lieber (5-8) walked two and struck out 10 in his second career complete game, including getting Belle swinging in the first and sixth innings and looking in the fourth and ninth.

"The last inning was real exciting," Lieber said. "I don't think I've ever felt like that, especially when Albert came up. It was just awesome, just a rush."

Belle came in batting .405 in a 10-game hitting.

"Lieber did a nice job," White Sox manager Terry Bevington said. "Albert's human."

Lieber allowed a run in the first when Ray Durham doubled and scored on a sacrifice fly by Frank Thomas. Young tied the game with his homer in the second. Sveum singled and scored in the fourth and homered to lead off the sixth.

Both homers came off former Pirate Danny Darwin (2-6), who gave up three runs and nine hits in seven innings.

In Los Angeles, Bobby Witt allowed one run over eight innings and became the first American League pitcher to hit a home run in nearly 25 years as the Texas Rangers edged the Dodgers 3-2.

Witt crushed a solo homer over the left-centre fence in the second to give himself a 2-0 lead and Texas added an run in the top of the ninth on Juan Gonzalez's RBI single.

Witt (9-4) had to sweat out the ninth as closer John Wetteland allowed a one-out homer to Raul Mondesi before striking out Todd Zeile and Todd Hollandsworth to end it.

Ismael Valdes (4-9) allowed two runs and six hits over eight innings but received little offensive support as the Dodgers managed just a solo homer by Mike Piazza before the ninth inning.



Colorado Rockies runner Eric Young (L) slides safely into third base covered by Anaheim Angels third baseman Dave Hollins in the second inning in Denver. Young advanced to third from first on a two single by Quinton McCracken (Reuters photo)

In Chicago, pinch-hitter Dave Clark smacked a three-run homer with two out in the bottom of the eighth to cap a five-run inning and lift the Cubs to an 8-7 victory over the Kansas City Royals.

The Cubs trailed 7-3 entering the eighth, but Hipolito Pichardo gave up two hits and balked Mark Grace home. Scott Servais followed with an RBI single to make it 7-5 before Clark slammed a 1-1 pitch from Ricky Bones (0-1) over the left-centre fence to put the Cubs in front.

Pichardo gave up three runs and three hits in 2/3 inning and Bones failed to retire any of the three batters he faced, taking the loss after allowing two runs and three hits.

At Colorado, Larry Walker hit his league-leading 25th homer and Andres Galarraga homered as the Rockies outslugged the Anaheim Angels 11-7.

In Cincinnati, Kent Mercker posted his career-high fifth straight win and Joe Oliver homered and drove in three runs as the Reds edged the Milwaukee Brewers 4-3.

Mercker (6-5) gave up three runs and seven hits in seven innings. Since his last loss on May 23, he has allowed nine runs and 33 hits in seven starts, spanning 47 1/3 innings.

Oliver's two-run homer in the second tied the game at 2-2 and his RBI single in the sixth tied it at 3-3.

Mike Fetters (1-4) took the loss, allowing Jeff

Brandon to score in the seventh on Bret Boone's groundout to third.

In Houston, pinch-hitter Kevin Seitzer's two-run homer off reliever Tom Martin with one out in the ninth inning lifted the Cleveland Indians to a 6-4 victory over the Astros.

After Houston tied the game at 4-4 on an RBI single by Bill Spier in the eighth, Pat Borders reached on an infield single to shortstop to lead off the ninth.

Batting for reliever Jose Mesa, Seitzer drove a 2-2 offering from Martin (2-2) over the left-field wall. Matt Williams and Brian Giles also homered for Cleveland.

Houston jumped on starter Charles Nagy for three runs in the second. Mesa (1-4) pitched a scoreless eighth for the win.

In St. Louis, Matt Morris allowed one run over 7 1/3 innings and closer Dennis Eckersley escaped a jam in the ninth as the Cardinals nipped the Minnesota Twins 2-1 in their first meeting since the 1987 world series. Morris (6-4) scattered nine hits without a walk, giving up a solo homer by Rich Becker in the second. Rich Robertson (7-5) was the loser, allowing two runs and six hits over six innings. Eckersley recorded his 370th career save.

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JERRY MAGUIRE

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Greece, Italy top Euro basketball standings

GERONA (R) — Standings in the second phase of the European Basketball Championship after Monday's games.

Teams that have already played each other in the first phase do not meet again. Results from the first round games are carried forward and used in deciding second phase classifications. The top four teams of each of Group E and F qualify for the quarter finals.



Spanish Mike Smith (L) goes for a basket as Poland's Adam Wojcik tries to block him during their European Basketball Championship match at Badalona's Olympic stadium (Reuters photo)

Group E (in Gerona):

	PL	W	L	PF	PA
1. Greece	5	5	0	379	337
2. Russia	5	4	1	04	334
3. Lithuania	5	4	1	404	373
4. Turkey	5	2	3	344	387
5. Israel	5	2	3	357	393
6. France	5	1	4	401	430

Group F (in Badalona):

	PL	W	L	PF	PA
1. Italy	5	5	0	369	331
2. Spain	5	4	1	391	308
3. Yugoslavia	5	4	1	433	374
4. Poland	5	2	3	365	443
5. Croatia	5	1	4	372	369
6. Germany	5	1	4	330	357

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Man. Utd. play in Far East

Manchester (AFP) — Manchester United will begin their pre-season preparations with a tour to the Far East which includes a visit to Hong Kong where they will face a Chinese select side. The Premiership champions report for training this weekend and will play in Bangkok on July 17 then in Hong Kong three days later. They complete their Far East programme by flying to Japan for a final game in Tokyo then end their period abroad with a friendly against Inter Milan in Italy on Sunday July 27.

Veteran set for Kent return

MAIDSTONE (AFP) — Alan Igglesden is poised to play his first championship game for nearly two years as fourth-placed Kent prepare for their clash with bottom side Northamptonshire which starts at Maidstone on Wednesday. The former England paceman's last appearance was against Warwickshire in September 1995 having missed all last season through injury and illness and he has only figured in one Sunday league game this summer. Fast bowler Dean Headley has joined Mark Ealham on test duty for England so Kent are refusing to rule out Martin McCague.

Star joins Feyenoord for free

WATFORD (AFP) — Watford general manager Graham Taylor is keeping his cool after losing Republic of Ireland international David Connolly to Dutch club Feyenoord without recouping a transfer fee. The bossman ruling allowed Feyenoord to sign the out-of-contract 20-year-old striker for nothing — but Taylor is refusing to get steamed up about the situation. "The Bosman ruling works both ways and in this instance it's Watford who are on the wrong side of it, so there's no ranting and raving on our part," said the former England manager. "He can now look to establish himself on the European and international scene. It's a wonderful opportunity and we wish him well."

Megson takes over Stockport

STOCKPORT (AFP) — Gary Megson was appointed as the new manager of Stockport county to replace Dave Jones who has taken over at Southampton. Megson, former Sheffield Wednesday, Everton, Newcastle, Manchester City and Norwich midfielder, has quit as boss of Second Division Blackpool to take over at county, who were promoted to Division One last season.

French players play in London

PARIS (AFP) — West Ham have snapped up Metz defender David Terrier and Arsenal are on the point of signing Deportivo La Coruna defender Jerome Bonissel, it was revealed on Tuesday. The 24-year-old Terrier, about to sign a three-year contract with the Hammers, will be in London for his first training session with his new club. The purchase of Bonissel gives even more French flavour to Arsenal's defence following coach Arsene Wenger's buys of Emmanuel Petit and Gilles Grimandi from Monaco. Bonissel could not settle in the north of Spain and had problems getting a first team place.

Dugarry signed by Barcelona

BARCELONA (R) — Barcelona confirmed on Tuesday the signings of Christophe Dugarry and Michael Reiziger from AC Milan and Dragan Celic from Partizan Belgrade for undisclosed fees. A club official said Celic would be officially presented on Wednesday, Dugarry on Thursday and Reiziger on Friday. French striker Dugarry and Dutch defender Reiziger have been linked to Barcelona for several months. Former Ajax manager Louis Van Gaal, who on Monday was presented as new Barcelona coach, is believed to have played a key role in the signings. Spanish media reports suggest Van Gaal may also push through the signing of Paulinho Santos from Portuguese club Porto.

Zamorano to play Columbia

SANTIAGO (R) — Chilean forward Ivan Zamorano is recovering rapidly from a back injury suffered in training and should be fit to play in the World Cup qualifier against Colombia on Saturday, the team doctor said Monday. "I'm a guy who recovers pretty quickly from injuries," said Zamorano, who plays for the Italian club Internazionale. "I don't feel any pain now, except when I bend to the side." Zamorano collapsed in pain on Friday at a training match after pulling a muscle in his lower back.

Matthaeus told to keep quiet

BONN (R) — Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer lashed out on Monday at Lothar Matthaeus, blaming Germany's most capped player for a public row between senior squad members. Matthaeus has launched a series of attacks on fellow players and club officials after he was dropped as club captain earlier this month. He was stripped of the armband for publishing his "secret diaries", a behind-the-scenes look at Bayern's season. Beckenbauer said he would tell Matthaeus when they met at a special match in Hong Kong this week that "all this rubbish is his fault, that he triggered off this whole landslide and that he should finally be quiet." Beckenbauer told Kicker magazine "Lothar should finally understand that his comments are not interesting. He thinks he has to have his say about everything. This is complete madness." But despite the row, Beckenbauer said Matthaeus still had a future at the club. "Lothar can even extend his contract, if he feels physically and above all mentally able to," he said. "I hope he plays even longer at Bayern, perhaps even until he's 40."

Elliott leaves Newcastle

BOLTON (AFP) — Robbie Elliott threw away the chance of playing in the European Champions League when he joined Premiership newcomers Bolton from Newcastle on Tuesday. The 23-year-old former England Under-21 star completed the 2.5 million pound (\$4 million) move after Newcastle finally agreed to let the utility player go. Bolton manager Colin Todd, who has been locked in negotiations with Kenny Dalglish's Newcastle for several weeks, said he was relieved after finally landing his man on a four-year contract.

Favourites beat the rain at Wimbledon

Hingis, Sanchez reach quarters

LONDON (AFP) — Top-seed and women's title favourite Martina Hingis and the player who has reached the final for the past two years Arantxa Sanchez Vicario beat the showers and raced into the last eight of the women's singles at Wimbledon on Tuesday.

And in the men's event, the 1991 champion Michael Stich, who is retiring at the end of the year, Britain's big-serving Greg Rusedski and Cedric Pioline of France also reached the quarter-finals.

When steady rain stopped play for the second time in mid-afternoon, three-times champion Boris Becker looked to be on his way to victory and held a 6-2, 6-2, 0-3 lead over Chile's clay-court specialist Marcelo Rios.

And Sandrine Testud, who ended the hopes of second-seed Monica Seles 24 hours earlier, was serving for the match against her French Fed Cup teammate Nathalie Tauziat and leading 6-4, 5-7, 6-5.

Hingis wasted no time

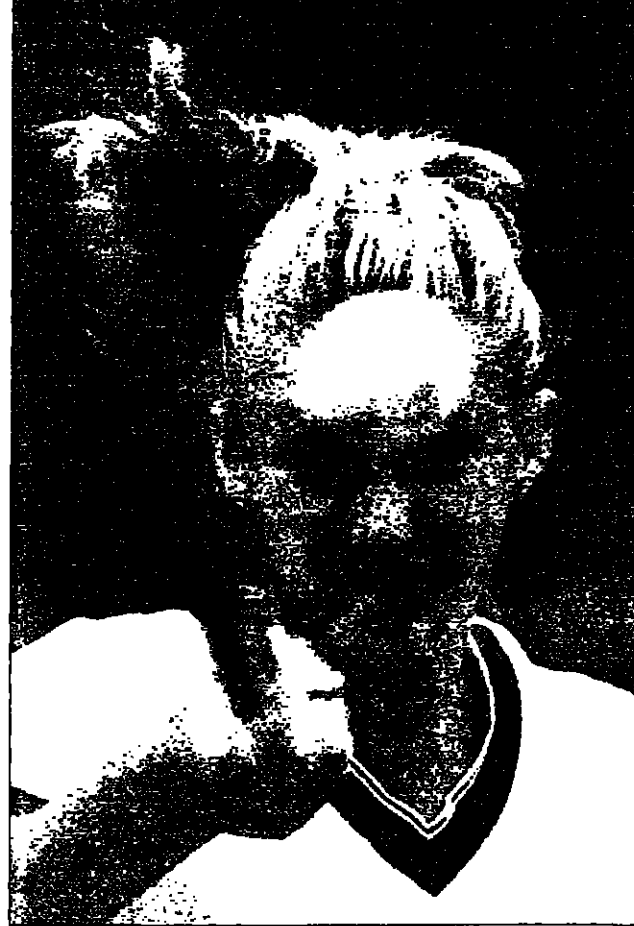
matches to play," joked the 16-year-old top seed after notching up her victory on the number-two showcourt.

Hingis, who now plays either Maria Vento of Venezuela or 18-year-old Denisa Chladkova of the Czech republic, said it had always been her dream to win Wimbledon — but she was taking nothing for granted.

"Nobody saw me as the favourite at the beginning of the tournament but I've got through pretty easily until now," she said adding: "But from now on it is going to be very hard."

Looking to her next match, Hingis said: "Chladkova beat Davenport here and has had a couple of great matches. I have known her since I was very little. I grew up with her in the Czech Republic and we played tournaments together for nine years."

"She was a very good friend of mine and she is one of the young players I think is very talented. She has already shown what



France's Mary Pierce plays a return to Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario during their fourth round match at Wimbledon. Sanchez Vicario, seeded number eight in the tournament, won the match 6-1 6-3 (Reuters photo)

won 41 matches so far this year.

Her only defeat came in the final of the French open last month when she went down in straight-sets to Iva Majoli of Croatia.

Appelmans, 25, who left the court chatting and laughing with her opponent, said: "Everything seems so easy for Martina."

"She's always in the right position. It doesn't look like she has to work very hard on the court. And that's the difference between her and the other players. I don't think I've seen anyone like her. She's unique."

Hingis's other scheduled matches on Tuesday are a third-round women's doubles alongside Arantxa Sanchez Vicario against Chanda Rubin of the United States and Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands.

She then plays a first round mixed-doubles with John-Laffie De Jager of South Africa against Todd Woodbridge of Australia and Monica Seles of the United States.

Sanchez Vicario, determined to make it "third-time lucky" in 1997 after two defeats in finals against the absent Steffi Graf, defeated big-hitting French opponent Mary Pierce 6-1, 6-3 in less than an hour.

The 25-year-old eighth-seeded Spaniard trailed 0-1 when rain first stopped championship play, but



Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario gestures to the player's box following her win over France's Mary Pierce during their fourth round match at the Wimbledon tennis championships July 1 (Reuters photo)

scoring a 6-1, 6-3 victory over Belgian Sabine Appelmans and admitted that she had been in a hurry because she still had two doubles matches to play.

"I wanted to keep it short. I had two more

she can do at this tournament.

"Vento I don't know that well but she must be playing well to have got this far."

Hingis, who has now beaten Appelmans in all four of their meetings, has

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Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ A 7 10 6 3
♥ A 8 6 3
♦ A 5
♣ 8 2

WEST
♠ 8 5
♥ K 4
♦ K Q 10 9
♣ A Q 8 4 3

SOUTH
♠ 4
♥ Q J 10 9 7
♦ A 8 7 2
♣ K 7 5

The bidding:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♣ 1♠ Pass 2♠
Pass 3♣ Pass 4♣
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♣

Take time to study the hand before playing to the first trick. Any diamonds in the dummy? South has a problem after North overcalls the one-club opening bid with one spade. The hand might be a total misfit. However, chances of game in either hearts or no trump are too good to ignore, and we approve of South's decision to bid hearts.

West led the king of diamonds, and a cursory examination of the bidding suggests that, with the one of clubs wrong, declarer need lose only two club tricks and a diamond. Deeper examination shows that declarer has to handle three losers in the minor suits, and that might prove a major problem. South found an elegant solution.

The king of diamonds was taken in the closed hand, the ace of spades was cashed and a spade was ruffed in the closed hand. After running the queen of trumps, a second trump picked up the outstanding fangs and another spade ruff revealed that West had started with nine minor-suit cards.

Declarer exited with a diamond, West's queen winning. The ten and nine of diamonds were cashed, declarer discarding two clubs from dummy instead of ruffing. That effectively cooked West's goose.

On lead with nothing but clubs, a low club would allow declarer to duck the lead round to the king of clubs, then ruff the two club losers in dummy. Returning the ace of clubs would be no better. Declarer would ruff in dummy, come to hand by trumping a spade, then cash the king of clubs and ruff the remaining club on the table. Either way, four hearts bid and made.



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Taiwan faces Chinese threat after Hong Kong handover

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan could now face greater political and economic threats from China which will use the return of Hong Kong to the motherland to press even harder for integration with this nationalist island, observers said here Tuesday.

They also warned that corruption, which plagued Hong Kong in the 1960s, would return with a vengeance and ravage the free market system of the former British colony.

"Taiwan shares the joy and pride in Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty, but it has also tasted the bitterness of China's expanded power and diplomatic victory," said Chen Chi-Nan, executive officer of Yang Shan Research.

"The techniques and strategies that Beijing demonstrated in negotiating with Great Britain over the Hong Kong issue will certainly put great pressure on this nationalist island in future dialogue with China," he added.

China has long had its eye on Taiwan, which it considers as part of its territory just awaiting reunification since communist troops drove rival nationalist forces here in

1949 at the end of a civil war.

It has offered Taipei the "one country, two systems" formula under which Hong Kong will be governed but authorities here have flatly rejected the idea, saying it would downgrade them to little more than a provincial government. Beijing will launch "full scale united front tactics" to woo intellectuals and business leaders here as a means of gaining support for reunification, Mr. Chen said.

In a measure of Taiwanese concerns for the future, tens of thousands flocked to a "Say No to China" rally on the weekend to clamour for independence.

"The changes of Hong Kong's status will also damage Taiwan's diplomatic efforts," acknowledged Hsiao Chun-Cheng, director of the Public Policy and Administration Institute of Chin Nan University here.

Some countries wishing to continue their presence in Hong Kong for business reasons might be forced to sever official ties with Taipei under Beijing.

Mr. Hsiao said, citing several Latin American nations.

China actively opposes other countries from maintaining official ties with

Taiwan and has striven hard to win over the island's remaining 30 allies.

It has also threatened to invade the island if it tries to declare independence.

In the latest development, the western African nation of Sao Tome decided not to allow Taiwanese diplomats there to join official functions or be seen in public buildings under pressure from Beijing.

"After the sovereignty change, Hong Kong no longer plays an intermediary role between China and Taiwan, forcing this island to face Beijing's high-handed threats directly," Mr. Hsiao said.

China would use the former British colony as a chip to force Taiwan into revising its mainland policy, he said, citing concessions already made before the handover.

Taiwan has already relaxed controls on air and sea exchanges with Hong Kong by permitting Dragon Air, which is over 20 per cent owned by China, to land here.

From Tuesday, freighters wholly owned by the Chinese were also allowed to call on its ports.

Taiwan has refused to open direct transportation exchanges with China.

But Beijing is not without challenges in ruling Hong Kong, said Chinese analyst Hsu Tung living in the United States.

"The greatest problem is corruption which is the product of a tyrannical rule and an unhealthy market economy," Mr. Hsu said.

He said corruption had become even more widespread due to "the absence of the rule of strongman or the rule of law."

Sung Kuo-Cheng, a China watcher at Taiwan's National Chengchi University Institute of International Research, contended that as a special region under Chinese rule, Hong Kong could play a key role in thawing cross-strait tensions.

"Hong Kong has been a trans-shipment centre for business and travel across the Taiwan strait, why not politics," he said.

He also said if the "one country, two systems" formula were successfully adopted, it would at least show that cross-strait disputes could be resolved through peaceful political negotiations, rather than military force.

Rights group says Israel thwarts Arab citizen rights

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli civil rights group accused Israel Tuesday of neglecting the rights of its Arab citizens and engineering a "quiet transfer" of Palestinians from Jerusalem.

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) said Arabs make up 17 per cent of Israel's population but get only two per cent of its services.

"The standard of living in Arab areas is much lower," ACR President Ruth Gavison told a news conference called to present the group's annual report.

"There was a major cut in

budgets across the board this year. It's easier to cut allocations to groups that are weak, and the group that's weakest in our community is the Arabs."

The annual report said bureaucratic hassles that prevented Palestinians from building houses, travelling and being united with their families had forced many families to leave Jerusalem.

Israel claims Jerusalem as its undivided capital, but Palestinians want the eastern sector as the capital of a future state.

The report called on Israel to implement an economic

affirmative action programme to help Arabs "narrow the gaps" and create genuine equality.

Discrimination is most severe in housing and education, the report said. It said public opinion against Arabs was declining, citing a ministry of education survey showing two-thirds of Israeli high school students opposed equal rights for Arabs.

"Jews in Israel still feel threatened, so they don't feel interested in the rights of the Palestinians," she said.

The study also criticised

Israel's treatment of what it said were 200,000 foreign labourers who were brought to Israel to reduce the number of Palestinians from the territories working inside Israel.

Mr. Gavison also voiced concern about the rights of non-religious Jews and said a proposed law banning non-orthodox conversions would constitute an infringement of religious freedom and equality.

At the same time ACR said the government had moved forward in its treatment of women, homosexuals and disabled persons.

Palestinian police chief denounces violence

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The chief of Palestinian police on Tuesday called on all members of the Palestinian Security Services to stamp out violence and corruption in their forces, after another detainee died in police custody.

General Ghazi Jabali published large advertisements in Palestinian newspapers urging the security forces to "respect the population, promote cooperation and stay within the bounds of the law."

General Jabali said nobody should be detained without an arrest warrant, a common practice among the multitude of competing security forces.

He added that it "was illegal to hit suspects during detention and interrogation, whatever the reasons."

The general's warning followed the death on Monday of a Palestinian man who was arrested on June 23 and allegedly severely beaten by members of President Yasser Arafat's Presidential Guards known as Force 17.

The Jerusalem-based Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG) said the detainee, Nasser Radwan, was admitted to hospital the day after his arrest with a fractured skull.

Eight members of Force 17 have been arrested following the death.

Iranian MPs demand corruption probe of outgoing cabinet

TEHRAN (AFP) — Conservative hardliners in the Iranian parliament have demanded a thorough probe of the personal finances of members of the outgoing government of President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, parliamentary sources said Tuesday.

A total of 156 of the 270 deputies in parliament have also asked the judicial authorities to publish the results of the investigation when it has been completed.

Moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami is to take over from Mr. Rafsanjani next month after winning a landslide victory in May polls over a conservative challenger.

The deputies' demand follows an outspoken attack on corruption at the heart of the state by the Islamic republic's paramount leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, earlier this week.

He pledged full support for an anti-corruption drive in line with Article 49 of the constitution which allows the state to confiscate property acquired through usury, bribery, embezzlement, theft, gambling, or abuse of the assets of religious

foundations. Fraud and bribery have become a common feature in Iran where public sector employees are among the hardest hit by the country's economic crisis and the decline in their purchasing power.

In one recent case a businessman was condemned to death for defrauding 7,000 small investors. He was branded as "corrupt of the earth," which is punishable by death under the Islamic laws brought in after the 1979 revolution.

In another case, 12 state employees have been jailed for receiving bribes and embezzling state funds which were to be used for a region devastated by an earthquake, newspapers said.

Last week, the judiciary announced that a former commander of the elite Revolutionary Guards militia, or Pasdaran, had been charged with stealing the equivalent of \$2.5 million before fleeing abroad.

Velayati meets former Afghan president

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati held talks here Tuesday with former Afghan president, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Mr. Mojaddedi, who is in Tehran on a mediation mission between the Afghan factions, called for the "continuation of Iranian humanitarian aid and efforts to bring an end to the civil war" in Afghanistan, the agency said.

Mr. Velayati repeated Iran's official line that there is no military solution to the crisis in its eastern neighbour.

"Recent victories and defeats in the country prove that one single group cannot rule without the others and any foreign interference will aggravate the situation," the foreign minister said.

Mr. Mojaddedi was in Iran on his way to Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan to try to mediate between the ruling Taleban and the northern opposition leader, General Abdul Malik.

Gen. Malik helped the Taleban take Mazar-e-Sharif in May before turning on the Islamic militia and driving them out of the city in heavy fighting.



Members and supporters of the Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, a group branded subversive by Beijing, marching down a street of Hong Kong pass under a Chinese flag Tuesday. Hundreds of demonstrators staged a march for love to test the waters on Hong Kong's first day under Chinese rule, despite not having the permission from the new Special Administrative Region administration (AFP photo)

Sphinx facelift to be finished by December

CAIRO (AFP) — Work to restore one of Egypt's most famous monuments, the Sphinx of Giza, will be completed in December after a seven-year operation.

Culture Minister Farouq Hosni announced Tuesday. Experts began work in 1990 to restore mainly the left side, the chest and neck of the colossal statue which has the body of a lion and the head of a pharaoh.

"The last pieces of restoration are concentrating on the rear part of the statue and will be officially completed in December," Mr. Hosni told reporters.

The Egyptian Antiquities Council said at the start of this year that experts had succeeded in repairing crumbled parts of the shoulders, feet and nose of the statue.

The Sphinx stands 72 metres tall and 12 metres wide near the pyramids on the outskirts of Cairo. It was erected near the pyramids during the fourth dynasty, from 2620-2500 BC.

It originally wore a royal headdress bearing a cobra and a false beard, a sign of virility among the pharaohs and gods.

Two legends have grown up around the disappearance of the features. According to one, Napoleon Bonaparte ordered his army to bombard the imposing statue which he regarded as a challenge to his might during a French expedition to Egypt from 1798 to 1801.

Bonaparte succeeded in destroying the nose and beard, and legend has it his subsequent downfall was due to the curse of the Sphinx.

The other story claims that a Muslim in the Fatimid era of 969-1071 believed the Sphinx represented a pagan cult denounced by Islam and attacked the nose and beard with an axe.

In the 19th century, Europeans stole a part of the beard which had fallen into the sand and took it to a London museum.

French judge to charge Algerian Islamist in U.S.

PARIS (AFP) — A French judge has travelled to the United States to lodge formal charges against a leading member of Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) with terrorism, judicial sources here said Tuesday.

Paris Judge Roger Le Loire went Monday to indict Anouar Haddam, who has been in jail in Virginia since December, on charges of "associating with criminals related to a terrorist enterprise," they said.

The charges stem from a French crackdown in November 1993 in which 95 FIS-linked militants were arrested as part of a probe into a network of logistical support for Islamist terrorists in Algeria.

Mr. Haddam presents him-

self as the head of the FIS's parliamentary delegation overseas. He is believed to be a radical, close to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's most hard-line Islamist militant organisation.

He was arrested by U.S. immigration authorities.

The Paris judge was accompanied by two officials from France's DST Counter-Espionage Department. He is to meet Mr. Haddam before returning to France at the end of the week, sources said.

The FIS, formerly Algeria's main Islamic political organisation, was banned after the military cancelled the second round of 1992 elections which it had been poised to win.

Sudan civil war putting at risks lives and health of children — UNICEF

GENEVA (AFP) — The ongoing civil war in southern Sudan is putting the future of an entire generation of children at risk, Khartoum's UNICEF representative said here Monday.

Women and children living in zones where government troops and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) are battling each other, face "unacceptable conditions and their survival is under constant threat," Henk Franken told a press briefing.

Between 80 and 90 per cent of Sudan's 26.7 million people lived below the poverty level with almost half the population under the age of 18, he said. The mortality rate for children below five years of age was 115 per 1,000 births, and 180-200 in the south, plagued by war for three of the last four decades in one of the world's longest, unresolved conflicts.

Child malnutrition ranges from 15 per cent in the north to twice the figure in some southern areas

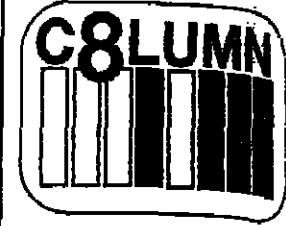
while slim access to safe drinking water was at the root of the vast majority of epidemics in the Sudan, according to the World Health Organisation.

The government allocates just five per cent of its annual budget to health care, and one per cent to education as resources are increasingly diverted to the war effort.

Mr. Franken, who pointed to lassitude among donor countries, said there were no solutions on the drawing board to the fighting in Africa's largest country.

The SPLA, one of the warring factions in the Sudanese Democratic Alliance, took up arms in 1983 to fight against domination of the mainly Christian Animist south by the Arab Muslim north.

More than a million people are estimated to have died since 1983 and more than four million have been displaced, making Sudan home to the world's largest refugee population, according to Mr. Franken.



Thief demands cash back

METZ (AFP) — A cheeky thief has demanded that police return some 500,000 francs which he stole in a series of bank raids, after he walked free from jail due to a clerical error. Philippe Thomas was jailed for seven years in 1987 for bank raids which netted him 2 million francs. But a court clerk mistakenly noted his sentence as seven months suspended, and he was let out. Prosecutors sought to resume action against him, but under French law were unable to since the case was more than three years old.

The case against him was therefore shelved. Thomas, now technically innocent, has taken action against the police for theft of money seized during a raid on his home in Metz, eastern France. "I simply want them to return money which was honestly stolen," he told the local daily L'Est Republicain. "It's a scandal to have your savings robbed from you like that."

Mass flogging of drunk-drivers in southern Gulf

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Police in a Gulf emirate whipped five Arabs in a packed court to punish them for driving while drunk, newspapers reported Tuesday.

The five were stripped of their shirts and lashed 80 times each. The Ras Al Khaimah court authorities found the five Muslims guilty of driving under the influence of alcohol, the reports said. Ras Al Khaimah strictly enforces Islamic law for adultery and drinking alcohol, which is banned for Muslims. It has also decided to flog speeding motorists to curb a rise in road accidents.

3 babies born in Hong Kong during midnight handover

HONG KONG (AFP) — A boy and two girls were born in Hong Kong at the momentous midnight moment on Monday when British rule ended. The three births were seen as auguring well for Hong Kong under Chinese rule as the number three, pronounced "san" in the local Cantonese dialect, sounds like the word for life. The three were all born at exactly 12 midnight, when more than 156 years of British colonial rule ended. New father Hui See-Hung told reporters after his son was born at the government-run Union Hospital that "this day is a significant day in history and I am glad we are part of it." Two girls were born at the private Baptist Hospital. The baby boy was presented with a gold medal by Union Hospital Director Anthony Lee. A China-run department store ran an advertisement offering a 30 per cent discount for the first babies born under Chinese rule.

Archbishop Tutu undergoing cancer treatment in New York

NEW YORK (AP) — Desmond Tutu arrived Monday to be treated for cancer at a Manhattan hospital while continuing his role at the centre of South Africa's quest for racial and political reconciliation. An appointment of former Archbishop of Cape Town to Israel, Mr. Tutu, the highest policy post on the continent, is expected to continue the continuity of the peace process. The retired Anglican archbishop, who won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize for his anti-apartheid efforts, had said he would undergo radiation therapy at the United States. Tutu had part of his prostate removed in January, and said he believed the cancer had spread beyond the gland.

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